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THE
EVANGELISTIC MESSAGE

Johnston and Bruner

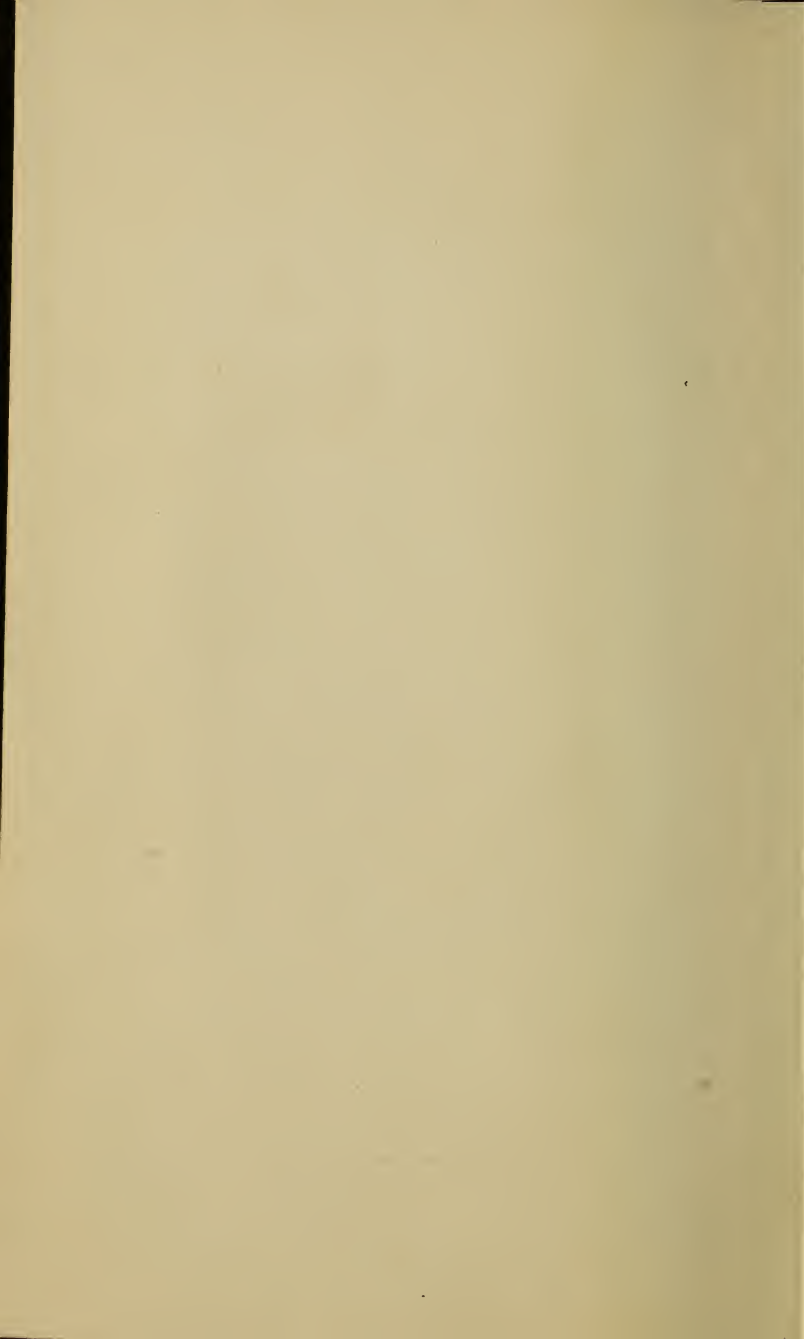


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The Evangelistic Message

By
W. G. Johnston
B. H. Bruner

"The fiery tongue is the frontispiece of the New Testament."



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DR. FRANK W. GUNSAULUS, Pastor of the Central Church, Chicago, and President of the Armour Institute, said to his successor, Dr. Frederick F. Shannon, just awhile before his death: "You know I never preach nowadays, Shannon, that I don't feel like casting the net. I will soon be through here, and I want to draw in as many souls as possible. Before long, I will have to report over Yonder."



SOME object to the word "revival." We confess to a liking for it. It is defined as "times of refreshing from the presence of the Lord." It means that stronger energy has been awakened in the people of God and that heavenly blossoms have burgeoned forth to adorn life and beautify the world. It is a fresh start in the adventure of faith.

What spring is to the earth, what a thunder shower is to a poisoned summer evening, what sunlight is to the flowers, what a physician is to the sick, what a harvest is to mankind, what a vision is to a pilgrim, what the morning star is to the lost traveler, what a ship is to a drowning man, that true evangelism is to a country, a state, a world.

—*Dr. B. A. Abbott, in The Christian-Evangelist.*

“GRIEVOUS TIMES”

But know this, that in the last days grievous times shall come.—II Tim. 3:1.

IT was not possible for the church to maintain the strength of her first passion. The apostle could predict this with certainty; for “the Spirit saith expressly, that in the later times some shall fall away from the faith.” These “later times” are any period of spiritual decline, and we are unquestionably in such a period to-day.

Mr. H. G. Wells’ Opinion

When Mr. Wells wrote his “Outline of History” he set forth the whole matter of humanity’s effort to make progress, and drew the conclusion that the world has not changed very much as to fundamentals. Civilization to-day, as always, has been for too few people. Our present civilization is the result of the effort, not so much to benefit mankind, as to exploit it. Consequently he finds the great financial and political interests exercising a too great power over human life. It is for these interests that we work and usually fight. Our progress toward industrial and political democracy has been too slow to save our civilization, which, the famous author believes, is going to smash. The consequences of the wars that have already been fought have little or no assurance for us. The Greeks had a very fine civilization for that time, 500 years before Christ. But they exhausted themselves fighting, and nothing could stop the consequent decline. That has been the history of every civilization before our own. They all lived by the sword, and by the sword they perished.

That, Mr. Wells fears, is what is happening to us. He fears that the process of destruction has already set in. His pessimistic view of history may be summed up in the lines of Omar:

“They say the lion and the lizard keep
The courts where Jamshyd gloried and drank deep;
And Bahram, that great hunter, the wild ass
Stamps o’er his head but cannot break his sleep.”

Lawlessness and Irresponsibility

Mr. James M. Beck, Solicitor General of the United States, in an address on “The Spirit of Lawlessness” warns us against impending disaster. He finds “an exceptional revolt against the authority of Law.” He quotes statistics from the criminal courts to show how crime has grown in recent years. In the Federal courts pending criminal indictments have increased from 9,503 in 1912 to over 70,000 in 1921. Allowing 30,000 of the cases now pending as arising under the prohibition statutes, the increase in nine years has been nevertheless 400 per cent. Losses from burglaries have grown from \$886,000 in 1914 to over \$10,000,000 in 1920; and embezzlements, in a like period, have increased fivefold. The streets of our cities have become the field of operations for the footpad and highwayman. In Chicago, 5,000 automobiles were stolen in a single year. Murder is of almost daily occurrence. In New York, in 1917, there were 236 murders and only 67 convictions; in 1918, 221, and 77 convictions. In Chicago, in 1919, there were 336, and 44 convictions. Demoralization in music, art, poetry, commerce and social life, Mr. Beck finds of the same sort. Mr. Owen Johnson would bring an indictment on very similar grounds in his late novel “The Wasted Generation.” And

Mrs. Mary Roberts Rinehart, well known novelist and writer, in a recent article arraigns this generation as "wasters." Speaking of a representative of an old American family, who was killed not long ago in England as the result of a fall from a pony while playing polo, she says: "He had nothing to do except to amuse himself, and killed himself in doing it."

Not All is Dark and Doubtful

If history shows anything, it is that in some of the darkest periods the foundations were being laid upon which a new superstructure would arise. For illustration, take the world just before the Reformation. The fall of Constantinople brought into Italy the scholars from the East. The ancient literature of Greece and Rome cast its spell over the strongest minds. Valla, Filelso, Beccadelli, Poggio, did their best to revive the pre-Christian ideals. Christians were barbarians. "All restraint was gone," says one writing of those times. "Every breach of the ethical demands of Christianity was regarded with unaffected delight. These unblushing pagans whose writings could not now be published, were in the employ of the Popes, and received the last sacraments of the Church like other men. The Popes themselves became pagan. Alexander VI, Julius II, and Leo X represent pagan morals seated in the papal chair. The form of Catholicism remained, but Christianity was literally gone." But God was getting ready for a new day. His spirit was at work in the hearts of the men who were to break the spell of corruption and inaugurate a new era in the history of the world. But for the Reformation, Christianity would have been lost. Bad as the

world is to-day, it is not as bad as it was just prior to the Reformation. There are many encouraging signs of a return to sanity and salvation through Christ.

Grounds for Hope

Looking back upon the titanic struggle among the nations, there are some values that can be clearly seen. Henry Churchill King summarizes some of them as follows:—

World-solidarity; prodigiously increased resources of power and wealth and knowledge made possible through modern science; forced scientific co-operation on an unheard-of scale; the world-wide trend toward democracy and the universal diffusion of knowledge; the establishment of a League of Nations to Enforce Peace, even granting its limitations; the steadily growing internationalism; and the deepening sense of the necessity of a larger and more significant goal for social progress.

The crisis through which the world has just passed was due to man's moral and religious failure. His spirituality had been too shallow, his vaunted Christian civilization but a thin veneer of gospel. There is now hope for better things, because the world has been brought to a realization of this fact, and consequently put in a more chastened and humble mood.

The Political Rainbow on the World's Horizon

The failure of the United States to enter the League of Nations, that she might contribute her mighty influence to the righteous adjustment of world-problems and make future wars practically impossible, was a source of discouragement to peace-loving, idealistic Christians. Then, it looked like the Irish question could not be settled, and hence

further disruption of the world seemed imminent. But God spoke, and England and Ireland reached an agreement, which bids fair to bring real peace. He spoke again in Washington and a good understanding is being sought by the leading nations of the world. The times are in His hands. He is gradually bringing order out of chaos, and enlarging the minds of men with the process of the suns.

The Spirit of Social Justice

Social data of every nature is being gathered, and deductions are being drawn therefrom that will ultimately result in better laws, better homes, and more sanitary working conditions. Secretary Hoover has a large committee of engineers at work gathering data and suggesting ways in which the lives of workers can be lengthened, made happier and more efficient.

The Direction of Progress

Man has wrested from the material world some of her most important secrets. The result has been a vast increase in physical power. His arm has been lengthened by mechanical inventions; his eye increased by the telescope and the microscope, so that the things hidden from former generations have been revealed to this; his locomotion has been so accelerated that distance is practically annihilated; and his voice so increased in volume and range by amplifiers that he can be heard instantly thousands of miles away. But all this has to do largely with man's body. His soul has not kept pace. It must now increase in faith, hope, and love. Hate must be banished from the world. While it lasts there can be no concord of nations. The spiritual forces of

Christianity, then, constitute the true objective, and the only, if the world is to register progress in the years to come. Christianity instead of being an outworn creed, is the only one that has not been seriously tried. It alone has power to heal the hurt of the nations.

John Huss suffered martyrdom in the fifteenth century. Awaiting execution in his dungeon, he dreamed that pictures of Christ, which he had caused to be painted on the walls of his study, had been obliterated by the pope. He was grieved. The next day he dreamed that a great number of painters were restoring the pictures of Christ in greater beauty. He saw admiring crowds standing about them, and heard them say, "Now let the pope and the bishops come; they will never be able to efface them again." He was encouraged. But the friend to whom he told his dream warned him against trusting in it. Huss answered: "I am not a dreamer, but I hold this for certain that the image of Christ shall never be effaced. They have wished to destroy it, but it shall be painted again in the hearts of men by painters abler than myself. The nation which loves Jesus Christ will rejoice thereat." The dream and the interpretation were true. In the words of Dr. John Watson: "Faith may languish; creeds may be changed; churches may be dissolved; society may be shattered; but one cannot imagine the time when Jesus will not be the fair image of perfection, or the circumstances wherein he will not be loved. He can never be superseded; he can never be exceeded. Religions will come and go—the passing shapes of an eternal instinct; but Jesus will remain the standard of the conscience and the satisfaction of the heart."

THE PROBLEM OF EVIL

* * * *but deliver us from evil.*—Matt. 6:13.

THESE words find a universal response in the human heart. From the beginning of conscious life on this planet, man has wrestled with the problem of evil, and when he has prayed at all, the burden of his prayer has been for some kind of deliverance from evil. Jesus recognized evil as a fact, and in this petition of his prayer, he leaves the impression that his Father and our Father has provided a way of deliverance from it.

Can we face the problem of evil in our age and be honest, without coming to a place of despair? Can we maintain our optimism without a denial of the fact of evil? Surely we cannot escape from it by assuming the superficial attitude of Christian Science. Their way has not worked, either for themselves or others. No, we cannot ignore or fail to face this problem without being guilty of intellectual and moral dishonesty.

Whence Does it Come?

But when we have admitted the fact, the mind insists on knowing the source or origin. Two general answers have been given to this inquiry. First, that evil is an external thing, or force, operating on man from the outside. Second, that the problem, or evil itself, is rooted in the choices and decisions of the human will. If the first position is true, if evil is structural in the life of the world as an external thing, then men are victims and all talk of a free will is foolish. Unless we accept the second position, unless we can take evil "at last to that deep

and solemn place where motives are born and decisions are made, unless we can trail it along its ugly path where a free man accepts it or rejects it, we have no right to talk about moral responsibility."

A Difficult Question

But to accept this second position leads us into a new difficulty. Why should this evil which came into the world through the wrong choice of the first man, be permanently fastened upon the race? The Biblical doctrine of original sin is one attempt to answer this question; the scientific theory of heredity is another. They are different, but do not necessarily contradict one another.

Both declare that the evils of the past live in us. The sins, and also the virtues of thousands of men are trying to express themselves in our bodies. Dr. Lynn Harold Hough tells of a story which is written by James Lane Allen of a young man who stood before the family portraits in his home. He was thinking particularly of two men at whom he was gazing. One was a man of austere and sterling character. The other was a gay and zestful devourer of all which allures the passionate taste. Each of these men was an ancestor of the young fellow who stood moodily looking upon their pictures. As he stood there he knew that those two old men were fighting inside him. They had gotten into his blood. And there they fought for the boy years and years after they were dead.

The evils of the past live in history and literature. Every dream of world dominion that has wrecked the lives of nations has been born and kindled by the reading of history. The low moral ideals which brought the brilliancy and art of the Greeks to the

dust, are alive in much of our modern literature. The evils of the past live in the customs of society—the use of intoxicants, the maintaining of large armies and navies, etc.

But all evils, it must be admitted, do not come from the past. Environment plays its part as well as heredity. Many evils are forced upon us by the wrong choices of men today.

Sin and Evil

Are we morally responsible for this mass of evil which is forced upon us from the past and which meets us in the present? The answer to this question calls for a distinction which is fundamental—that between evil and sin. “All sin is evil, but all evil is not sin.” Man is not responsible for the sum total of evil either from the past or in the present. But when man faces this evil, he and he alone is responsible for his attitude toward it. Man has the power to accept the evil tendencies from the past, combine them with the evil of the present, and project them into the future of the race, if he wills. Evil which a man deliberately chooses for himself and for the future of the race becomes for him sin. And he cannot take the middle ground, he must decide. It is the choice of man which makes this fundamental distinction between evil and sin.

What does this mean? It means as some one has said, “that when God made a man He did a dangerous thing.” To have a free will, to have a body and mind, means that sooner or later the temptation will come to choose evil rather than good. “To possess a human organism is to have an amazing instrument for goodness. It is also an amazing instrument for sinning.” Dr. Gunsaulus said, “It takes a great

man to be a great sinner. David could never have been a little sinner."

Conclusion

If it is true that we are caught in the coils of evil from both the past and the present, and if a choice is absolutely necessary, what are we to do about it? What is the meaning of this petition, "deliver us from evil?" Does God actually take us away from evil? No, this is not God's method of deliverance. Jesus prayed not that his disciples might be taken out of the world but that they might be kept from its evil influences. God's way is to deliver us from evil by re-enforcing the human will to choose good rather than evil. Christianity is God's answer to humanity's prayer.

Through its author, Jesus Christ, it has done two things. First, set in motion great ethical and social forces which are constantly reducing the sum total of evil in the world. It is making human society sweeter. Through education and reform it is making it a little easier for each succeeding generation to do good and harder for it to do evil. Second, in His own Person Jesus has made it easier for men to be good. There is something so attractive and compelling about His Divine Personality that those who live close to Him find it easy to choose the right. No man has ever come in close contact with Him and remained the same man. Salvation, ultimate deliverance from evil, is only to be found in Him. "There is a call for decision lurking in the background of every page in the gospels, and a challenge to choose the best."

Note.—For a full and splendid discussion of the whole problem of evil see Lecture II in "Productive Beliefs" by Lynn Harold Hough.

THE CONDITIONS OF A RELIGIOUS REVIVAL

Behold, Jehovah's hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither his ear heavy, that it cannot hear: but your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, so that he will not hear.—Isa. 59:1, 2.

THE need of a genuine revival is apparent. There are many symptoms of the waning power of religion. Many Christians seem to have lost all joy in the religious life. They remain members of the church, and attend her services, by force of habit largely, but they have no joy in doing so. This is a sure symptom of their loss of faith. In many lives prayer has ceased to have any vital meaning. Many continue to pray, but it is largely a formality, a sort of religious etiquette, which, owing to their past interest, they feel bound to observe. The interest in the conversion of souls—real conversion—has entirely passed in many churches. There may be interest in securing members to help bear the financial burdens or to give the church prestige; but as to whether these new members shall come in just formally, or through an experience of Christ, is a matter of indifference—in fact, we fear the preference would be against the experience. When many churches would have revival meetings, they “hire” an evangelist, through a “committee” specially appointed to make the business arrangements. There is little or nothing said or done about prayer, soul-preparation, and reconciliation to God and one another. The decadence of religion in many churches is appalling. An Indiana pastor in speaking of the hundreds on his church roll, many of

whom were on the absent list, told his congregation that several of the "absent" members were in the penitentiary. Of course many congregations, in truth, would have to acknowledge a similar condition. It all points to the loss of vital faith, to the absorption of the church in having a "good time," and to the lack of authoritative spiritual voices calling upon the church to repent and do her first works over.

Why Not a Religious Revival?

If religious conditions are bad, only a revival of religion can remedy the situation. Just now there is great agitation in behalf of a "revival" in business, and the agitation is bound to produce results. Then there are periods of revivals in music, art, and literature; and why not also in religion? Many profess not to believe in the religious revival; and on purely theoretical grounds they should not be needed; for the church should be fervently devoted to the interests of religion all the time. As a matter of practical experience, however, the church does not live up to her ideal. She must have "seasons of refreshing from the presence of the Lord." Martineau speaks of "the tides of the Spirit." Then a revival, earnestly and honestly conducted, is not nearly so abnormal, as a cold, formal, worldly, and loveless church.

The Fault is Not With God

His "hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither is his ear heavy, that it cannot hear." God is the same yesterday, to-day, and forever. He is always truth, mercy, and love. There can be no time, in this world, or in any possible world, when

he would be unwilling to forgive and restore upon the fulfilment of the conditions that would make the bestowal of his mercy and healing love worth while. "Bring ye the whole tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house, and prove me now herewith, saith Jehovah of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it" (Mal. 3:10). "And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of Jehovah shall be delivered" (Joel 2:32; Acts 2:21). There can be no unwillingness with God. There can be no difficulties on the divine side. On our side, however, there are conditions to be met.

Iniquity Separates Us From God

Iniquity means all departure from the rectitude and law of God. It is crookedness. God's truth, God's Spirit, cannot come into us until we have been made straight. "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (1 John 1:9). A learned man said, "The three hardest words in the English language are 'I was mistaken.'" Frederick wrote to the German Senate, "I have just lost a great battle, and it was entirely my own fault." "This confession," said Goldsmith, "displayed more greatness than all his victories." "I do plainly and ingenuously confess," said the great English Chancellor, Lord Bacon, in the midst of very trying circumstances, "that I am guilty of corruption, and so renounce all defense." "I beseech your lordships to be merciful to a broken reed." Where the sin has been against men, there can be no confidence and no salvation, until it is confessed and renounced.

No revival of religion can take place until sin has been dislodged. The revival begins as soon as we feel sorrow on account of sin. But so long as sin remains, our efforts to find God must prove abortive. It is said that if a trolley wire were to be cut, and only a thin piece of paper placed between the severed ends, it would be sufficient to hold back the current coming from the power house from the other wire. As soon as the car passed this point it would be dead for lack of current, and only the thin paper would be the obstruction. In like manner we obstruct the Holy Spirit on account of our sins, both small and great, and there can be no life, no help, no revival, no salvation, no connection with God, until they have been removed.

MY PART IN A REVIVAL

*Create in me a clean heart, O God;
And renew a right spirit within me.
Cast me not away from thy presence;
And take not thy Holy Spirit from me.
Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation;
And uphold me with a willing spirit.
Then will I teach transgressors thy ways;
And sinners shall be converted unto thee. * * *
For thou delightest not in sacrifice; else would I
give it:*

*Thou hast no pleasure in burnt offering.
The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit:
A broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not
despise.—From Psalm 51.*

THE part we take in anything depends largely upon our estimated importance of that thing for us. What are we to have in the way of dividends, of pleasure, of power, of social prestige? we ask, when being urged to do this or that. The same question often arises with the seekers after God. "Then Peter answered and said unto him, Lo, we have left all, and followed thee; what then shall we have?" (Matt. 19:27). It is but natural that we should first of all seek firm ground for our own souls; for if there is no personal assurance of salvation, we can make little or no contribution to the kingdom of God. But the nature of the new state into which we come by conversion is such, that we immediately cease to think about what we shall have and begin to think about the good of others—especially their salvation. It is written of Paul that after his conversion he "straightway * * * proclaimed Jesus,

that he is the Son of God'' (Acts 9:20). But this "first love" often grows cold. The chilling winds of worldliness blow upon it and cool its ardor. Little by little the things of the world creep into the heart, polluting and destroying its power. Hence the members of the church are in great danger of becoming "no lovers of good, traitors, headstrong, puffed up, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God; holding a form of godliness, but having denied the power thereof" (2 Tim. 3:3-5). The first part, consequently, that the individual Christian should perform in helping to bring on a revival, is to be absolutely honest with himself and God, confess his sins and, without any mental reservation, turn from them. This opens the channel for the grace of God.

Our Constant Need of Watchfulness

The Master exhorted the disciples to "Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation" (Matt. 26:41); and Paul said, "I buffet my body, and bring it into bondage: lest by any means, after that I have preached to others, I myself should be rejected" (1 Cor. 9:27). Then there is the exhortation to "make our calling and election sure." There was once a congressman in Massachusetts who failed of election by two votes. He was so sure of his election that he took no interest in a certain small town. There were no speeches, no fire works, no parades. Nothing was done to disturb the apathy of the voters, and hence they did not turn out to vote for him. This neglect lost him the whole election. Some Christians are so sure of going to heaven because they have been baptized and are in regular standing, that they fail to covet earnestly the best gifts,

and to renew their diligence in prayer and good works.

The Need of a New Heart

The heart is the center of our intellectual and affectional life. If it becomes corrupted, the whole man is affected. It must be renewed, and kept pure and sweet, if the life is to exhale fragrance as a flower. "Born again"; yes, and again, and again. When Sir Walter Raleigh closed his illustrious career on the scaffold of an ungrateful country, and laid his head upon the block, he was asked by the executioner whether it lay right. "Whereupon, with the calmness of a hero, and the faith of a Christian," says Guthrie, "he returned an answer, the power of which we shall feel when our head is tossing and turning on death's uneasy pillow: 'It matters little, my friend, how the head lies provided the heart is right.'"

The Need of a Right Spirit

Faith, pious humility, unselfishness, good works

A "right spirit" is very nearly synonymous with good will; and good will is one of the most important forces in the world. The will is the whole man in action. It represents his attitude to all the problems of life. It definitely means the casting of whatever influence he has on the right side of things. He will eschew merely selfish interests and work for the general good. It is this "right spirit" that is sorely needed to-day. International good will is wanting, notwithstanding our international conferences of many kinds. The nations cannot dwell together in amity until they have good will toward each other. Good will is always unselfish will, and means the application of whatever force it has for the estab-

lishment of righteousness in the world. The prayer for a right spirit strikes deep into the reality of things, and to have it answered means the renewal of the face of the earth.

The Need of the Joys of Salvation

The religion of Jesus is preeminently a religion of joy. There have been philosophies many, and religions many, but only one Gospel, one Good News. Life without joy is existence in a prison. It is the joy of life that makes it worthwhile. "Rejoice in the Lord always: and again I will say, Rejoice" (Philippians 4:4), is the exhortation of Paul. The Christian carries the secret of a happy life in his heart. He is not dependent upon favorable circumstances for the joy of his existence. A joyless Christian is an anomaly—indeed, he can hardly be called one at all. Then it is certain that such cannot successfully recommend their religion to others. This joy precedes the conversion of sinners. A revival means increase of joy. One of the best ways for a church member to help bring about a revival of religion is for him to be restored unto "the joy of thy salvation."

Our Need of God's Willing Spirit

When the psalmist speaks of God's "willing" or "free" spirit he uses an expressive way of saying that God is untrammelled in any way, and is at liberty to help anywhere, any time, he may be called upon. We are in constant need of this help. Jesus promised the Holy Spirit—the Comforter, Paraclete, Helper—to his disciples. Paraclete means one called to the side of another to help. We find temptation too great for us, we call to our aid the Paraclete,

the Helper; we find our work too difficult, we call upon him again; we find our burdens greater than we can bear, and our Helper is near to lift the load.

Our Need of the Sacrifices of a Broken Spirit

Here is a beautiful Hebrew parable that forcibly illustrates the need of a broken spirit in order to be accepted with God:—

“A poor penitent who had just risen from a sick bed came up to worship before the Lord. He could now scarcely sustain his tottering limbs. The words of the Psalm were like cordial to his sinking spirit. One after another brought his sacrifice and was accepted; but the penitent had none. At length he drew near the priest and said, ‘Last night a poor widow and her children came to me, and I had nothing to give her but two pigeons which were ready for sacrifice.’ ‘Why then art come to see me, my son?’ ‘I heard them singing “The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit.” Will he not accept mine? God be merciful to me a sinner.’ The old priest was melted, and tears came to his eyes as he raised the poor penitent. He laid his hands on his head: ‘Blessed be thou, my son! Thine offering is accepted. It is better than a thousand rivers of oil. Jehovah make his face to shine upon thee and give thee peace.’ ”

THE VOICE OF GOD

* * * *This is my Son, the Beloved, listen to him.—
Mark 9:7 (Moffatt).*

ON the night of April 23, 1920, we are told the planet Mars was much nearer the earth than it has been for many years. Rev. Hubert L. Simpson in his book, "The Intention of His Soul," tells of two noted scientists who, all night long were on the alert for wireless messages that would prove the presence of intelligent beings in Mars and their desire to communicate with the sons of earth. He quotes from the press reports two significant paragraphs:

"Lengthening their sound waves they sent their ears past the radius of the world's noises, past a violent electrical storm in the upper strata of our atmosphere, out into limitless space, that dead cold vacuum in which throughout eternity our world has been spinning. But all was silence. No answering sound wave flashed out of infinity, and Mars pursues its path in wordless disdain. * * * But at least we are left with a marvelous picture of two patient men listening, listening, listening, to that ageless silence in which the world was born, listening in sure certainty that one day that silence will not be a gulf but a bridge over which we will carry at last the triumphant standards of humanity."

"And," says Dr. Simpson, "if I were an artist I should want to try and put upon canvas that picture of these listening men. For it is the ear of humanity that is astrain through the throbbing silence of that night to catch the voice that never

spoke. * * * Oh, for one word, one little spoken word! How much it might have meant! That night when others were dancing and chambering and slumbering the ear of man might have heard the word for which the ages have been waiting."

A Better Way

With thoughts like these the preacher tells us how he laid down his morning newspaper and picked up a little book to read again a letter written by a fisherman almost two thousand years ago. And as he read, with the sense of disappointment in his heart that always comes to humanity when some great scientific experiment fails, these words struck his eye: "And I think it right, so long as I am in this tent, to stir you up by putting you in remembrance * * * For we did not follow cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we were eye-witnesses of His Majesty. For he received from God the Father honor and glory, when there came such a voice to him from the excellent glory, 'This is my beloved Son * * *' this voice we ourselves heard come out of heaven, we who were beside him on the sacred hill."

In the hour when the mind and skill of man has reached its limit—when some lonely pioneer has fought his way across the trackless spaces of the universe and stands on its outer rim baffled because he can go no further—while the world looks on in disappointment, it is always some man of God who breaks the silence by pointing humanity again to this "sacred hill." There, while three awed and frightened men listened the silence of heaven was broken and humanity heard God's voice.

"Listen to Him"

This is God's supreme word to men. The voice of God had been heard by man before. The first man heard it when he was driven out of the garden. Abraham heard it calling him into a larger life. Moses heard it speaking the divine law on Sinai. The Hebrew prophets heard it. But never had the voice of God spoken any such message as this. His final revelation of Himself was to be in a Person, and His final message to those who would hear His voice is, "Listen to Him." The language which God speaks to the soul of man now is the language of contact with a Living Personality—"His Son the Beloved."

When Jesus first spoke, humanity marveled. They had never heard such a voice before. The verdict of those men who were sent by the authorities to arrest Him, and who returned empty handed to say, "Never man spake like this man," is the verdict of all who heard Him.

When men listened to Jesus speak, new conceptions of the fundamental forces and relationships of life were born. In the words of Jesus they found a new conception of God; a new conception of man, of the worth of the individual; a new conception of sin, of its terribleness; a new conception of forgiveness, a forgiveness rooted not in human sacrifices, but in Divine love; a new conception of love as being a spirit of good will toward all men; a new conception of brotherhood, of the essential unity and solidarity of the race; and a new and glorious conception of the immortality of the soul.

Not one of these conceptions has been outgrown. The world must still listen to the voice of Jesus

Christ for its deepest wisdom in things spiritual. If you would know God, man, the meaning of life, the meaning of love, the meaning of brotherhood, the truth of immortality—any of these things which the soul is constantly striving after, “Listen to Him.” The verdict of humanity in its sanest moments is that Jesus Christ represents the last great word from the voice of God. No one has voiced this feeling better than Prof. Glover:

“The world, in its more quiet and candid moods, when it is not controversial, knows quite well by now that the character and personality of Jesus are the ultimate standard. However uncertain about God we may be, Christian and non-Christian alike, deep in our hearts, if we put it in plain language, we have a feeling that if God really is like Jesus Christ, things are all right. In blunter language, what we really mean is this, that if God will mould himself on the example of Jesus, then we can trust Him. That means that, for everyone who is dissatisfied with the justice of the world, there is eventually one court of appeal, the tribunal of Jesus Christ, that we live in a world where Jesus is the last word.”

Those Who Refuse

But there were those who refused to listen to Jesus while he was on earth. He came unto his own people as God's supreme revelation, but they received him not. After pleading with them in vain all Jesus could do was to stand broken-hearted above their Holy City and pour out his soul in disappointment (Matt. 23:37-38). Jesus closed his Sermon on the Mount with a warning of the fate awaiting those who refuse to hear his words (Matt. 7:24-27). In

the action of the Rich Young Ruler, of Judas, and Pilate, we see the results, in character, of those who refused to listen. Those in the parables who are left on the outside of closed doors, and those who are cast out into the darkness, are those who have refused to listen. And in the picture of the last judgment those who "depart to everlasting punishment" are those who failed to heed the voice of God speaking in Jesus.

Is there not a warning here for our age? Who can read the words of Jesus standing over Jerusalem without feeling that he had the same love for our civilization, and had we listened to him we might have been spared the desolation of war? Can we not see in the faces of the multitudes who rush madly and blindly past us on every side, seeking they know not what, the anguish of those who realize they have built their houses on the sand? There is no uncertainty in the New Testament concerning the fate of those who refused to listen, and there is no mistaking their fate to-day.

Conclusion

"Never man spake like this man," and it is His voice we need to hear. It is the only voice that can speak a message of peace and good will to the nations. It is the only voice that can speak a message of brotherhood to an age torn by class strife. It is the only voice that can speak a message of redemption to the souls of men and women who are lost in selfishness and sin, and call them back to the Father's house. "Listen to Him."

WHAT IS CHRISTIANITY?

*For I know him whom I have believed * * *—
II Tim. 1:2.*

*For me to live is Christ * * *—Philippians 1:12.*

THE difficulty of even attempting to answer this question is apparent to any one who thinks. What we shall say in this sermon is only suggestive of some lines of thought and action along which the church must travel in these days if it would make any deep impression on the average individual. Two important considerations make necessary a re-examination of some things we have always taken for granted. First, a widespread feeling that the church has demanded more of those who would become Christians than the Lord and his Apostles themselves demanded. Second, the amazing revelation which came to religious workers among our soldiers of the average man's ignorance of what Christianity really is.

The Church and Christianity

It was stated by a great scholar before the war that, "Never before were so many men filled with such longing * * * for firm and consistent convictions. Men are ready to give anything for a conviction—for a belief that is really believed in. The demand is for faith in which there is real faith; men require convictions as to the meaning of life." These words are more true now than then, for the war shattered what little faith many men had. Men now want a basis of life "which is just as credible to their intellect as it is inspiring to their

souls." They want a religion which appeals to the whole man; one that has in it the call to the heroic.

What has the church offered? Too often only creeds, dogmas, confessions of faith, and the speculations of pious men. Every age has added to the requirements for entrance into the church. The first century church insisted upon the acceptance of a large part of the Jewish Ritualism. The church in the Roman Empire made much that was purely pagan a test of membership. The church of the Middle Ages made the rigid interpretations of philosopher and theologian the door to membership. And so on down to the day of the modern creeds. What passed in those ages cannot get by the inquiring mood of the modern mind. People are tired of being told they must believe everything under the sun to become members of the Christian church. What our age wants, and has a right to expect from the church, is a positive statement of the great fundamental doctrines and ideals of Christianity, which will appeal equally to the mind and the heart.

The Average Man and Christianity

The soldiers in the late war represented the average man on the street. What was discovered concerning their knowledge of Christianity is largely true of the average man's knowledge now. Two questions were asked of the religious workers in the army. First, "Have the men in general any clear idea of what Christianity is?" Second, "Do they think of the Christian life as the following of negative commandments, or as a life of active good will?" By far the larger part of the answers to the first question reveal the fact that the soldiers had very little clear knowledge of the real nature of

Christianity. The answers to the second question show that the vast majority of the men looked upon the Christian life as the following of negative rules. As one man expressed it, "Christianity means life with all pleasure, pure or otherwise, crossed out with the words, 'Thou shalt not.' " For the amazing revelation which these answers contain every religious worker should read the report of the commission under the title "The Army and Religion," published by the Association Press. And there answers represent the knowledge and the attitude of the average man toward Christianity.

What is Christianity?

One set of men hold it is a philosophy deducted from the gospels. Another, that it has nothing to do with philosophy, but only with "feeling, suffering, sinning humanity." Still another affirms that its genius is essentially economic.

Another point of discussion concerns the question whether Christianity is a belief or a life. Many assert that it is primarily a belief, "the intellectual acceptance of a body of truth and doctrine." But in the light of the Scriptures this conception does not stand. Jesus declared that even the demons believed that he was the Christ. He also said that the confession, "Lord, Lord," was not sufficient for salvation. Another group asserts that Christianity is primarily a life, irrespective and independent of belief. No matter what you believe if your life is right. But this position does not stand the light of history and experience. History has been made, and is being made by men of powerful beliefs.

Both are wrong. Christianity is both belief and life. "It is belief, deep, strong, insistent and com-

elling; but it is also life, positive, definite, holy and unselfish. * * * It is belief voicing itself in life, and it is life flowering in belief."

Belief and Life

Here Paul speaks the great message which the church needs to-day. Great theologian, and master of apologetics and doctrine that he was, when he came to sum up the total and absolute meaning of Christianity for himself he said, "I know him whom I have believed. * * * For me to live is Christ." This is the answer to our question.

Christianity is a belief, but a belief in a "whom" and not in a "what"; in a living personality and not in a dead system of doctrine. And a belief in a person is much different from a belief in a book or a doctrine. It demands more than the working of the intellect. It demands the devotion and loyalty of the soul.

Christianity is a life. It is a reproduction of the life of this Risen Glorified Christ in whom Paul believed. This was the only passion of Paul's great soul. Christianity is Christ made real in human conduct—the saving of human society by bringing the ideals of Christ into all of its relationships through individuals.

Conclusion

If Christianity is essentially belief and life, are the forms in which it is expressed in our church organizations necessary? Yes, because practically all of these forms, which are as old as the New Testament, center around the person and work of Christ. However much they have been abused at the hands

of the church they came into being because of their relation to Christ.

The ordinances were all designed to honor the Risen Lord. The Lord's Day was kept sacred in memory of his resurrection. The Lord's Supper was a memorial supper for him. And Christian baptism, around which so much needless and divisive discussion has centered, was directly connected with Christ. It was a symbol of his burial and resurrection. Men and women were asked to believe in him as Savior and Lord before they were baptized. Then, they were baptized into him, buried with him, as a pledge of their loyalty and as a token of their desire to rise to walk with him in a new life.

With the conception of Christianity as a positive belief in Christ and a positive life for Christ, we can meet the man who refuses to accept all the notions of any church and give him two definite things to do. And we can meet the man who is ignorant of the real nature of Christianity with the challenge to follow a great, Living Personality, in whose service there is a call for all the latent heroism in the human soul.

THE OLD STORY IS TRUE

For we did not follow cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we were eyewitnesses of his majesty.—II Peter 1:16.

MANY and profound have been the changes since these words were penned. We live in a new world of science and mechanical power; indeed, it seems that the world of fairy lore and magic has become the real world; the dreams and fancies of the ancients, the familiar realities of the present. We penetrate, scrutinize, analyze, and synthesize everything under the sun, and beyond the sun, both visible and invisible. The modern spirit has also been a destroying spirit sweeping over the world like a besom of destruction. Many false gods lie prone in its wake, and many venerable superstitions have crumbled at its touch. How fares it with the old story of Jesus and his resurrection? Can we still believe it? Or, has this fierce, questioning, modern spirit digged away the foundations? We believe it was never more secure than it is to-day. The testing fires have only refined and strengthened it.

The Competence of the Witnesses

All things are established upon the testimony of men concerning the *what* and *how* of their experiences. What we know in any department of science, literature, or philosophy, depends upon credible testimony. What we know about the resurrection of Christ is based upon the testimony of those who had actual experience of His resurrection.

Were these witnesses qualified? That they were, appears from several considerations. (1) They were well acquainted with Jesus. They had for several months been intimately associated with Him, and, hence, would be able to recognize Him, not only from His physical features, but also from His general character. (2) There was a lack of expectancy on the part of the disciples. When the women returned from the tomb with the resurrection message to the apostles, "these words appeared in their sight as idle talk; and they disbelieved them" (Luke 24:11). This, of course, heightens their testimony, as they were convinced in the face of their unbelief. (3) The witnesses had ample opportunity to get all the facts. They saw, conversed, and ate with Him after He was risen. They saw the empty tomb, and knew that it was empty. (4) The variety of the circumstances under which He appeared to them, is another evidential fact. (5) Then there is the positiveness of their testimony. Whatever may have been the circumstances in which Christ manifested Himself to different disciples at different times, there is unanimous agreement that He did manifest Himself in life after death. They all agree that they saw him, not once, but some of them several times. On this one vital, supreme fact they are in absolute agreement. (6) When we consider their sincerity, we seem to have the crowning evidence that they "did not follow cunningly devised fables." They lived lives of self-denial, and most of them sealed their testimony with their own blood. These men and women were competent witnesses on the ground of both experience and character, and their testimony is indubitable, unassailable, unshakable, and absolutely convincing to fair-minded, reasonable people.

The Transmission of the Testimony

If it be admitted that the testimony is credible and genuine, what assurance have we that it has been passed on to us in an unimpaired condition?

(1) The oldest New Testament manuscript is not earlier than the fourth century; but there are a number of documents reaching back to the apostles themselves which contain a sufficient number of quotations from the gospels to show their early or first century origin. Thus by means of these quotations we can trail the existence of the gospels back to apostolic days; just as the pioneers, wandering through American forests, were able to find their way back by means of blazed trees.

(2) There has always been an oral tradition in the church in support of the genuineness and credibility of the gospels. This tradition has persisted from the earliest times to the present, and is entitled to certain evidential value.

(3) The fact of the church bears its own testimony. It is here to-day; and we can trace its history back through the centuries as far as Christ, and after that we fail to find it. It must, therefore, according to its own claim, have been in its origin vitally connected with Him. Rev. J. J. Haley once told of an experience he had on the ocean. In the midst of a perfectly calm and cloudless day, the ship began to roll heavily on account of the sudden appearance of great waves. It was a matter of astonishment that such a thing should happen. An explanation was asked of the Captain, who told them that there had been an earthquake somewhere, and the waves set in motion were just reaching them. They could be traced back to the earthquake. So

with the church. Christ was responsible, through the power of His resurrection, for the origin and mighty sweep of the church. The church, whatever the varying form of her doctrine and organization, has had an unbroken existence from apostolic times to the present, and has been the custodian of both the written and oral testimony concerning the resurrection of Christ.

The Resurrection and a New Humanity

In the early Christian centuries, there was a widespread belief that Christ had created a new race, a new humanity, very different from any race then existing upon the earth. And there was truth in this. The resurrection of Christ was the beginning of this new humanity. It was established on such indubitable grounds, that men could neither doubt nor deny; and, consequently, aided by the presence of the life-giving Spirit, men were begotten again, born again, became a veritable new creation in Christ, animated and guided by the most unselfish and exalted spiritual motives. A new interest in human life and welfare rapidly manifested itself wherever the gospel of the resurrection was preached. The spirit of selfishness, of vindictiveness and cruelty, began to pass away. Slavery was powerfully affected. In its external form it did not immediately pass; but its status was changed. In Christ there was neither bond nor free. Masters learned to love their slaves and to treat them as brothers. Our modern era sees chattel slavery gone. It could not bide the Spirit and teaching of Christ. Then consider how the feelings of humanity have been refined. One of the early decrees of Constantine, the first Christian Emperor, was against the

amphitheatre. The public conscience, refined through the gospel, ratified the imperial decree and the amphitheatre with its bloody orgies ceased. The gospel gave a dignity to labor never known before. The early Christians, as their Lord before them, labored diligently with their hands. The home came to have a more beautiful meaning under the gospel. Woman was given a more exalted place, and little children were of the kingdom of heaven. The ancient world was practically destitute of any sort of generosity. The church organized the charities and beneficences of that early time; and the vast charities and benevolent institutions of our time are both directly and indirectly the result of the gospel of the resurrection. These beneficent and wonderful changes in the world can all be traced, for their full measure, to the resurrection of Christ. They, therefore, constitute an important branch of evidence in behalf of his resurrection.

The Awful Alternative

An Englishman wrote a novel some years ago in which he set forth the supposed finding of archaeological evidence that definitely disproved the resurrection. He pictured with dramatic power the gloom that settled upon the civilized world, unrelieved by a single ray of light. Paul had thought of that dreadful alternative also, and it was unspeakable even at that early day when Christianity had yet to win its greatest triumphs. "And if Christ is not risen," he says, "it follows that what we preach is a delusion, and that your faith also is a delusion. Nay more, we are actually being discovered to be bearing false witness about God, because we have testified that God raised Christ to life, whom He did

not raise, if in reality none of the dead are raised, For if none of the dead are raised to life, then Christ has not risen; and if Christ has not risen, your faith is a vain thing—you are still in your sins. It follows also that those who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished. If in this present life we have a hope resting on Christ and nothing more, we are more to be pitied than all the rest of the world” (1 Cor. 15:14-19. Weymouth).

There are so many things that *are* that would not *be*, but for the resurrection of our Lord,—things that have so wonderfully enriched, deepened and strengthened our lives—that it would be like tearing out our hearts were it possible to give up the doctrine of the resurrection.

The Old Story is true. All the evidence points one way. Without mental reservation we can affirm to-day, as did the first “eyewitnesses of His majesty,” the fact and power of His resurrection.

And it is a logical and necessary inference that His teaching is true, and the salvation offered to sinners a real deliverance from the power and dominion of sin.

KNOWLEDGE THROUGH EXPERIENCE

*But Naaman was wroth, and went away, and said, Behold, I thought * * * And he returned to the man of God, he and all his company, and came and stood before him; and he said, Behold now, I know * * *—II Kings 5:11, 15.*

“**B**EHOLD I thought.” This is where Naaman began. “Behold, now I know.” This is where he ended. It is generally somewhere between these two extremes that men who are in Naaman’s condition find themselves. The story of Naaman is so human that it is always full of interest. It gives us the picture of a man who came to a knowledge of the way of salvation through experience.

What Naaman Thought

Naaman thought he knew a great deal. He was sure of three things. He thought he knew just how a prophet of God should go about curing his disease. He thought that to cure so great a disease he must necessarily do some great thing, something spectacular. He thought the rivers of his own land were better than the river Jordan. There was little chance for an argument with Naaman on these three points.

And his presumptions were not groundless. They were based upon his worldly knowledge. He was a man of high standing in military circles. He was in the habit of being honored. According to all that he knew about hospitality and courtesy the prophet should have come from his house and offered him the honors due a visiting military leader. According to his way of thinking a man must always pay in

kind for any services rendered him. For a big favor he must pay a big price. He went prepared to do this. And according to his standards of measurements there was no comparison between the muddy Jordan and the clear, pure waters of Abana and Pharpar. In his thinking Naaman was not all wrong. These things were true to a certain extent. Where he made his mistake was in forgetting one important thing. He forgot what he was seeking at the hands of the prophet.

If he had been coming to visit the prophet as a representative of his nation he might have expected to be received with honor. If he had come to purchase military supplies he might have expected to pay a big price. If he had been looking for a place to take a refreshing bath, he naturally would have selected his own rivers in preference to the Jordan. But this was not his mission. He was a leper and he had come to this man of God seeking salvation, relief from this death-dealing disease. He was looking for salvation from God and yet he was wroth because God did not work in man's ways. He wanted to dictate the terms and conditions of his own salvation. He was like the tramp who refused a bread and butter sandwich saying he did not like bread and butter. He thought he knew how God ought to save him. And here is where he came near making a fatal mistake. The only thing that saved him was the fact that he cooled off enough to listen to the common sense of one of his servants.

A Very Common Mistake

Naaman's was a very common mistake. Thousands are making it every day. They come to the

church with just as absurd demands. They think the church ought to take notice of their social or business position and make a big fuss over them. They feel they must be allowed to do some spectacular thing when they decide to become Christians. They are very much surprised and displeased when they are told they must give up some of their social life and do some of the humble work of the church. When you tell them they are supposed to attend church they say, "Are not the automobile and the 'movies' much better than the church? Why go to a dull church service when you can go to a live show?" Like Naaman these people forget what the church is for and what they ought to be seeking when they go to church.

The church is not an institution for the purpose of coddling people. The true man of God in the pulpit will not make a great show over any one man or class of men just for their patronage, and to satisfy their vanity. If men are looking for a place where they will be honored and coddled at every turn they will be disappointed in the church. If men are looking for a way of buying salvation through some big gift or some spectacular piece of work, they are looking in the wrong place when they approach a true church of Jesus Christ. There may be churches in which this is done, just as there were plenty of prophets in Elisha's day who would have been glad to take Naaman's gifts, but they are not true churches. And if men are looking for mere entertainment, they are looking in the wrong direction when they expect to find it in the church. The services of the church must always be interesting and attractive, but their aim is not to entertain.

What Naaman Found Out

Here are some of the things Naaman learned. He came to know that there was a true God who could save men—a wonderful discovery. He came to know that God does not work as men do. He came to know that genuine obedience is worth more in the sight of God than all the great things a man may be able to do. He came to know that for his purposes the muddy waters of the Jordan were worth far more than the clear waters of his own rivers. Through the experience of obeying the voice of God through his prophet he gained salvation and knowledge. Before, he could only say, "Behold, I thought." Now he could speak with the assurance of a man who knew.

Other people have had this same experience, and it has been the means of their salvation. There are some things about the plan of salvation which has been offered by the various churches that any man has a right to question. But there is a plan of salvation outlined on the pages of the New Testament which any intelligent man can read for himself and understand, and which no man dare call in question. God's ways in salvation are not man's ways.

Conclusion

In the life of one of the greatest New Testament characters we have an illustration of this same principle of knowledge through experience. In the beginning of his career Paul said concerning Christianity, "Behold I thought". At the end of his wonderful life he could say, "I know". The secret of Paul's knowledge, and that which transformed his life completely, was his absolute sur-

render of self to God. In his letters one of his constant themes is the will of God. In 1 Thessalonians he defines the will of God (4:2-12). In Galatians he sounds a protest against the attempt to substitute moral living for the life of absolute surrender. In 1 Corinthians he demonstrates that God's will can be done in all professions and by all kinds of men (7:20-24; 10:31). Romans contains his protest against the attempt to substitute membership in an established religious body for the life of absolute self-surrender (6:13; 8:14, 15; 12:1). In Colossians he demonstrates the relation of obedience to wisdom (1:9-10; 2:3). In Ephesians he restates again in practical terms what God's will is (4:25 to 5:17). In Philippians he asserts that God can use everything which befalls a man who is living the surrendered life—suffering, opposition, death—so that he will rejoice and glory in his sufferings and feel that for Jesus' sake, even to die is gain (1:21; 2:5-11). He also demonstrates in this letter that a sure issue of obedience is a mighty power to achieve results (4:13). Shall we follow the example of these two men through obedience to the will of God into a knowledge which shall issue in our own salvation?

THE REALITY OF SIN

If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.—I John 1:8.

EVERY great religion has assumed that something is wrong with humanity. Both Judaism and Christianity, the religions of the Bible, have given the name sin to this disorder. There is a close relationship between the Old and New Testament conceptions of sin, and yet in many ways they differ. The Old Testament assumes that man's condition as a spiritual being is not what it was meant to be by his Creator. The terrible nature of sin is nowhere more forcibly shown than in the preaching of the long line of Hebrew prophets.

The New Testament completes the conception of sin toward which the Hebrew conscience had been slowly working its way. The meaning of the term which Jesus used most frequently for sin is, "missing the mark". In his eyes those who had sinned had missed the mark of their high calling as sons and daughters of God. In the epistles of Paul we have a very full discussion of sin. Paul has as the background for all his thoughts on sin the moral order of the universe. To this order all men are responsible, and sin is that which keeps them from measuring up to this responsibility. It is a universal fact: "All have sinned and come short of the glory of God."

A Declining Sense of Sin

The reality of sin is nowhere questioned in the Bible. But men in every age have questioned it,

and the declining sense of the reality of sin is one of the most deadly perils to which man is exposed. That peril was never greater than to-day. The early Christians saw sin in its naked ugliness; lust and cruelty wore no disguise "in the time when Paul was warning the cultivated Corinthians in the most beautiful city in the world against a sin so loathsome that it is mentioned under the breath to-day." The ruthless slaughter in the Roman arena called forth no protest. The uncovered vileness of sin caused men to realize its terrible reality.

But in our more protected and ordered society we are not so sure of its reality. We are warned by some of the most careful students of our modern life that the sense of sin is on the decline. Prof. James H. Snowden suggests the following reasons for this.

First, there has been an abatement in the general sense of fear of the supernatural. Second, there has been a decided reaction against extreme views of hell and punishment for sin. Third, our views of the character of God have changed. Sermons like Jonathan Edwards' "Sinners In the Hands of An Angry God" are no longer preached. Fourth, our views of sin itself have changed. "Any pantheistic or deterministic theory of the world cuts up sin by the roots and reduces it to pure mechanism and necessity, so that it is no more a guilty choice and act than the growth of grass or the fall of a stone, and such views have been popularized in much of our literature." Another very real cause for the declining sense of sin, and one the results of which are well stated by Richard Roberts, is the pressure of the evolution hypothesis

as it has been misinterpreted. "From the doctrine of evolution we inferred a doctrine of fated progress and of inherent human perfectibility; and out of this material we drew a picture of a universe rolling steadily up a gently inclined plane to the city of God. Under the spell of the prosperity and the general ease of life in our generation, we lulled ourselves into the belief that this old world of ours was pressing with an irresistible momentum to some 'far-off divine event', and that our human delinquencies were no more than untoward little accidents which do not seriously affect the ultimate issue."

The Reality of Sin

These conditions have caused us to "deceive ourselves" for a day, and have greatly hindered our acceptance of the real truth about sin; but they have not destroyed its reality. "Sin is still a frightful fact in the world. It writes its ruin in vice and crime, in individual murder and in the colossal convulsions of war, in all human selfishness and cruelty, trials and tears, sufferings and sorrows, broken hearts and lost souls. It is the awful tragedy of the universe. Only fools mock at it. Angels weep over it, and the Son of God gave Himself as a sacrifice to atone for its guilt. Its retribution cannot be escaped. Hell cannot be dug out of the universe, or its fires be put out. God's justice never slumbers nor sleeps. He cannot overlook sin and be a respectable God. The integrity of the universe cannot tolerate it. God will not let it mock Him, and it is still an eternal law of life that the wages of sin is death." (Snowden.)

Jesus and the Reality of Sin

When Jesus began His ministry he did not face the world with a theory of sin. He faced the awful reality of sin in the multitudes who were in His eyes "like sheep without a shepherd". He saw its marks everywhere in human disease that appealed to His healing touch. With the fact of sin Jesus always associated another fact—that of "lost humanity". The men and women Jesus looked upon as being lost are living examples for all time of the reality of sin. These, according to Prof. Glover, Jesus puts into four general classes:

First, the group who stand out in his famous description of the Last Judgment, those who in their failure to serve their fellows in the common ministries of life had missed the mark and lost their souls. Second, those warned in the Sermon on the Mount,—people whose sin is not murder or adultery, but merely anger and unclean thought; not the people who actually give themselves away like the publicans and the harlots, but those who in their moral cowardice would like to do the same things if they dared. Third, the most notorious group of all whom Jesus warned—the Scribes and the Pharisees. Theirs was the sin, which according to Jesus was the worst of all sins, that of deliberately refusing to receive the light and revelation of God. Fourth, the group of people who, because of the weakness of their wills, could never decide in the face of clear duty. Unable to use their wills, these people were the victims of sin in its worst forms. Surveying these four groups we see the reality of the sin that finally cuts the soul adrift from God and reduces it to utter bankruptcy.

Conclusion

For the fact of sin in all its terrible reality Christianity offers a remedy. For the vilest sinner there is forgiveness. If Christians have sinned and missed the mark of their high calling the message is, "If we confess our sins, He is willing and faithful to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." For those without Christ as a Saviour the word is plain. "He that doeth sin is of the devil, for the devil sinneth from the beginning. But to this end was the Son of God manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil".

If you feel the burden of sin in your heart there is no cure save Jesus. No earthly power can help you. You remember how Lady Macbeth inquired of her court physician,

"Canst thou not minister to a mind diseased,
Pluck from the memory a rooted sorrow,
Raze out the written troubles of the brain,
And with some sweet oblivious antidote
Cleanser the stuffed bosom of that perilous grief
Which weighs upon the heart?"

There was no human medicine for Lady Macbeth and there is none for you. Our salvation is from God through Jesus Christ.

THE REALITY OF SALVATION

*For I am not ashamed of the gospel: for it is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth * * *—Romans 1:16.*

SALVATION is a large word. How large we never knew until we began to read the New Testament in the light of modern science and experience. In a theological sense the term means liberation from the bondage and results of sin; a deliverance from sin and eternal death; a redemption. In a practical sense it means the act of saving or delivering from destruction or calamity. Three facts about salvation stand out prominently in the New Testament. First, it is of God and it is His power (Romans 1:16). Second, it is contained in the gospel and its author is Jesus Christ (Romans 1:16; Hebrews 5:8-9). Third, there is no other way of receiving God's salvation but through His gospel and His Son (Acts 4:12). Salvation is, then, simply Jesus Christ and His gospel—the divine man and His message.

Is this salvation of God which is embodied in Jesus and His Gospel a reality? Applying the test of pragmatism, have they worked? Has Jesus and His gospel been a saving power in human society? Jesus held that "the practical virtue of any system of faith lay in its effects on conduct." "By their fruits ye shall know them" was one of His earliest sayings. Speaking to His Disciples near the close of His ministry He showed His willingness to submit to this same test. "Believe Me that I am in the Father, and the Father in Me; or else believe Me for the very work's sake." Let us measure Jesus and His gospel with His own measuring stick.

The Gospel a Saving Power

Has the gospel been a saving power in the world? In one of His first public utterances Jesus made certain definite promises as to what His gospel would do. "The spirit of the Lord is upon Me because He hath anointed Me to preach the gospel to the poor; He hath sent Me to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of the sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord."

Has the gospel accomplished or even partly accomplished these things? Are the poor any better off in Christian America than they were in pagan Rome? Do the broken-hearted find any greater comfort since Jesus said, "I am the resurrection and the life" and Paul sang his wonder-hymn, "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?" Has the lot of the captive been made easier under the practices of a Christian civilization? Are the blind better cared for, the bruised and suffering any happier, and has the acceptable year of the Lord been preached to all nations? We cannot answer these questions in detail, but a few observations will help.

A few years ago Dr. Mason W. Clark of Brooklyn used this striking illustration of the difference between a pagan and Christian society: "If you were to bring from the grave some old inhabitant of Pompeii and show him the dark side of New York, he would look wearily up into your face and tell you that they did all these things in his day only perhaps a little more heartily and vivaciously than we do now. If you were to call up some ancient Babylonian and lead him through these scenes of vice and shame, he

would assure you that it is all old to him, and not half so interesting as it was in the open life of Babylon. But suppose you were to call up an old Pompeiiian sinner and a debauched citizen of ancient Babylon and show them the Christian side of our modern life, take them to one of our hospitals for instance. How their eyes would brighten. 'We never saw this in Pompeii or Babylon. This is truly interesting. Who ever heard of such a thing as this?' Take them to St. Christopher's (a home for children) and imagine their amazement. 'Why do you care for sick children like this? We used to let them die, or throw them out in the woods to perish of exposure. This is really interesting.' Take them to the society for the prevention of cruelty to children. * * * Take them to our Christian houses for the poor and afflicted and despairing, and watch their expressions. 'Why, this is something new. We never had these things in our day.'"

When the Chinese Commissioners visited Chicago some years ago they were shown the sights of the city by a committee. Asked what interested him most, one of the leaders replied, "The Hospitals, The Hull House, and the Young Men's Christian Association." These interested him most because they were most unlike any of the fruits of his own civilization. It is the commonplaces of a Christian civilization, fruits of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, which interest the non-Christian world most.

Jesus Christ a Saving Power

Has Jesus Christ Himself been a saving power in the lives of men? Can He save men today? "When a man has fallen from innocence, when the pilgrim has become the prodigal, and the fighter the de-

feated," can Jesus restore his manhood and impel him toward righteousness?

A most vivid story of the power of Jesus in saving men is told in "The Varieties of Religious Experience" by William James, and in "Twice Born Men" by Harold Begbie. The life stories of Jerry McAuley, and S. H. Hadley, and John B. Gough, and Harry Monroe, and Mell Trotter, are records of the marvelous saving power of Jesus Christ in the experience of individuals. A most unusual story of conversion is to be found in John Masefield's "The Everlasting Mercy." "It is the story of a conversion—not the interesting conversion of some cultured agnostic, but the sensational, catastrophic conversion of a village wastrel, a drunkard, poacher, bully, and libertine. It is the drama of a great spiritual conquest, not only a vivid poem, but a psychological document of surpassing interest."

Jesus is a Saviour of men. "There are millions of Christians in the world, men of every temperament, of every age, of every race, of every social condition, who, with one voice are ready to testify that Jesus has been their Saviour; that He has drawn them to Himself, has given them moral victory, has led them into communion with the Father, has given unity to their lives, has furnished them a new and infinitely worthy motive and purpose, has filled them with a love for their fellows, has inspired in them the ideals of a new humanity in a new society, and has put in their hearts faith to overcome the world."

Conclusion

An atheist once asked an Oriental how he knew there was a God. The man answered by inquiring, "How do I know whether it was a man or a camel

that passed my tent last night?" He knew by the footprints in the sand. Pointing the atheist to the beauties of the setting sun he asked, "Whose footprint is that?"

How do we know that salvation is real? We know from these footprints all around us. We offer this gospel to men today with just as much confidence as Paul offered it to the Romans. In the intervening centuries it has been tested, and has stood the test. We are not ashamed of the gospel, for in the light of what it has done in the world and in the lives of men, we know that it is "the power of God unto salvation."

“HE FINDETH FIRST HIS OWN BROTHER”

*He findeth first his own brother Simon * * **
He brought him unto Jesus.—John 1:41, 42.

IN the opening pages of the Old Testament, we have presented two brothers, Cain and Abel; in like manner the New Testament opens with a picture of two brothers. But here the likeness ends. Cain hated Abel, and murder was the logical result. Andrew loved his brother Simon, and salvation was the outcome. Out of the heart are the issues of life. The spirit and the purpose of the heart irrevocably determine our actions.

Andrew's Great Teacher

John the Baptist was Andrew's first teacher. He magnified not himself, but the coming Christ. Many teachers and preachers, it has been said, have just light enough to attract attention to themselves, as the moon; while others are like the sun, which draws attention away from itself to the landscape. John taught his disciples to think about Christ. When He came they were ready to receive Him. John was not ashamed to decrease while He increased. He was for the cause of righteousness, not himself; and if Jesus could more successfully establish this cause than he could, why should He not be preferred? In this, John showed his real greatness, and Andrew caught his spirit.

“John, than which man a greater or a sadder

Not till this day has been of woman born;

John, like some lonely peak of the Creator

Fired with the red glow of the rushing morn.”

Andrew Among the Twelve

Andrew seems to have held an inconspicuous place among the twelve. He is represented (Mark 13:3) as one of the inner circle with the twelve, for he is one of the four who questioned Christ "privately." Then he was the one who had knowledge of the lad with "five barley loaves and two fishes." Once more, when the Greeks expressed a "desire to see Jesus" it is to Andrew first that Philip reports the request, and they both lay the matter before Jesus. He seems to have preached no great sermon like Peter, nor to have undertaken any great missionary task like Paul, but to have busied himself with the smaller and less conspicuous duties of life, such as noticing boys and introducing people to Jesus. After all, there can be only a few outstanding men in the kingdom of God. The others must be content with less conspicuous service. Indeed there would be no notable ones, but for the lesser ones; just as there would be no Niagara, but for the number of small springs that feed the great lakes which pour out their waters over the mighty precipice; no Mississippi, but for the many small tributaries that make the mighty river. A continent needs no more than one Niagara, it has been said, and one great river is sufficient to drain its wide extended plains. One Beecher suffices for a generation; but the need for those who do personal work, attend to the small social affairs of life, those who have time to be friends of the little children, is always pressing. Andrew attended to these things.

Taking Time to Notice the Boy

How did this apostle, the intimate of Jesus, know that a lad had just so many barley loaves and fishes?

Perhaps Andrew lifted him up in his arms, or stood him on an old tree trunk or a rock, that he might get a better view of the Master. This would have won the boy's friendship, and he would have told Andrew in turn all about the lunch that his mother had prepared for him. We know not what became of that boy; but it is certain that he never lost the vividness of that scene, nor forgot his friend. Boys need encouragement. A word spoken to them in season how good it is. Prof. Hopwood, while the train halted at a station in Virginia, saw a boy standing by. He walked up to him, and laying his hand on his head, said, "When you get ready to go to college, come to Milligan, Tenn." That boy did get ready for college, and went to Milligan. He has been an honored teacher in the public schools of his native State for many years. He went to that particular college because its president had spoken kindly, encouragingly, to him, and at the right time.

Beginning With One's Own Kin

It is certainly a mark of earnestness when one can urge religion upon his own kindred, members of his own household. This Andrew did. He first found his own brother Simon, and brought him to Jesus. Many years ago Mr. Moody was preparing for a great religious campaign in Louisville, Ky. While the workmen were still busy constructing the tabernacle, this text, "He findeth first his own brother Simon," in large letters was hung up in a conspicuous place. One of the workmen saw it. He remembered that he had a brother, and, strange coincidence, his name was Simon. This brother was not a Christian. He had never spoken to him about becoming one. How would he approach him? He

prayed; yea, he wrestled in prayer. So, early one morning he called on his brother, who expressed surprise at seeing him at such an hour. He told him his mission as best he could. The brother had not expected that kind of interest. But he was aroused. It was now the turn of Simon to wrestle and pray. He became a Christian.

Andrew brought Peter to Jesus. Jesus saw at once that he had made a "find." Here was a man who would become great in the kingdom of God and turn many to righteousness. As the result of Peter's sermon on Pentecost, some three thousand were converted. They were Andrew's converts. He had converted the preacher. He was not much of a preacher himself, but he could convert men who could preach.

Personal Effort in Soul-Winning

The preachers who stand in the pulpit do marvelously well in bringing home the message of Christ; but their message is largely to those who have been supposedly converted. The alien sinners are not there. They must be visited. Christ must often be offered to them in a personal way. The preacher is only one man. The congregation must take up his message on Sunday and multiply it during the week. Someone felicitated Dr. Lyman Beecher upon his great success in Boston. He replied that it was simple. His four hundred members took up the message that he gave them on Sunday and scattered it abroad during the week. Sam Johnson is said not to have liked Wesley. He had no time to talk. When the talk was just getting interesting he would run off to see some old woman who was in want. How can we stay in one place

long when there is so much to do and the time so short in which to do it?

"Winning Men One by One" was the title of a book put out a few years ago. It is certainly a Scriptural method. It is the old way. Every renewal of evangelical zeal, however, discovers it afresh. It is just as necessary to be concrete in winning men for Christ as it is in making our way in business. In gunpowder the finer the grain the greater the explosive force. Henry Ward Beecher said: "The longer I live the more confidence I am coming to have in those sermons where one man is the minister and one the congregation, and there is no doubt as to who is meant." Joel Stratton laid his hand on the shoulder of John B. Gough, a drunkard in the gutter, and said to him: "Man, there is a better life for you than this." That exhortation went home. John B. Gough was redeemed. John Eaglen enabled young Spurgeon to see the Lamb of God, and that was a greater work than feeding a multitude.

Winning the World in This Generation

It is possible; not probable. It is possible through personal evangelism; not so in any other way. "The salvation of the individual culminates in the salvation of the race, the salvation of the race involves the salvation of the individual," said Bernard Lucas in *The Empire of Christ*. The delay in the Kingdom's coming is not from God. Says Professor A. G. Hogg: "A Father-God must be always ready to usher in the 'Kingdom,' always *willing* to put forth His infinite resources for the rescue of His children from evil powers too strong for them. If he does not it must be that He is hindered; and nothing

can hinder a Father-God from being fully Himself to His children, but their distrust and self-willed independence which distrust engenders * * * 'The mills of God' have ground slowly only because He chooses to wait for man * * * Let there be born an implicit trust and its twin-brother, the surrender of self-will, and at once that limited slow-working Providence which had been so much the rule as to seem a fixed order of nature would prove its unnaturalness by giving place to a new system of nature, an unrestrained exercise of God's infinite resources on the side of all that is good in man and good for man. So, and only so, would the Kingdom of God arrive; its time was *whenever men learned faith.*"

If the individual church members could be made winners of souls, the world could be converted in this generation. This is the way A. F. Schauffler puts it: "If every disciple today were to call only one other person to Christ in each year, and that one were to call one other, how swiftly the world would be wholly converted! There are today millions of true believers in the world. But if there were only one hundred, see how quickly the work would grow. In less than twenty-five years the world would be converted, for this would double the number of disciples each year. First year, 100; second year, 200; third year, 400; fourth year, 800; fifth year, 1,600; sixth year, 3,200; seventh year, 6,400; eighth year, 12,800; ninth year, 25,600; tenth year, 51,200; (Well,' says someone, just here, 'that is rather slow progress, only 51,200 in ten whole years.' Go on, however, ten years more, and see how your numbers will look then); eleventh year, 102,400; twelfth year, 204,800; thirteenth year, 409,600; fourteenth

year, 817,200; fifteenth year, 1,634,400; sixteenth year, 3,268,800; seventeenth year, 6,537,600 (it's growing now); eighteenth year, 13,075,200; nineteenth year, 26,150,400; twentieth year, 53,300,800; twenty-first year, 104,601, 600; twenty-second year, over 209,000,000; twenty-third year, over 418,000,000; twenty-fourth year, over 826,000,000; and in the twenty-fifth year, over 1,600,000,000, or more than the population of the whole earth. This shows the power of 'ones' multiplied."

To accomplish this stupendous but glorious task, each Christian should begin right where he is. Speak of Christ to the man next to him. A man came to Mr. Spurgeon and asked for some church work. "What is your trade?" asked the preacher. "An engine driver," was the reply. "Is the stoker a Christian?" "No." "Very well, then," said Mr. Spurgeon, "there's your church work!"

THE LURE OF THE IMAGINATION

* * * *every man in his chambers of imagery.—Ezek. 8:12.*

THESE words are lifted out of an interesting chapter. Jehovah is showing the prophet the abominations of Israel. Through an open door he is led into a place where the vilest sort of idolatry is being indulged. The message is this: that what these men are doing in the dark, thinking God does not see them, every man is in danger of doing in the chambers of his own imagination.

“It is in the chamber of imagery that our real life is lived, for what we desire, that we seek; what we covet, that we pursue; what we think, that we are. * * * Our chamber of imagery is not built with hands, it is within ourselves. It is painted with no colors of human art; our thoughts are the artists, and our fancies are the things they paint. There is an inner life which we all live, so closely hidden from the world, that those who know us best, little suspect its nature and character. There is a secret chamber of the mind, the chamber of our imagination, where we live a life to which the world holds no clue. Our real life is the life of our thought, our hope, our desire. And our thoughts are forever painting for us pictures which allure and delight us, and perhaps disgrace and debase us.” (W. J. Dawson.)

The Power of the Imagination

It would be difficult to overestimate the power of the imagination in the life of the race. It has been the inner source of locomotion that has lured

humanity upward and onward toward its ultimate goal. Every Utopia has been the creation of some imagination.

In religion the imagination has been the vehicle through which God has revealed Himself to man. Horace Bushnell says, "The gift of God in the Holy Scriptures, is a gift to the imagination." William Elliot Griffin writes, "In a word, imagination as the vehicle of divine truth dominates the Book of Books."

In all types of literature the power of the imagination has been supreme. "Strip the race of imagination and every poet would be 'mute inglorious.' The novelist needs this breath to give life to his characters, for no writer can image to you what he himself has not seen. The historian may collate his facts encyclopedically; but if he is wanting in imaginative power, he cannot clothe the dry bones with flesh and send the blood coursing through the veins."

In science, where men are supposed to deal only in cold, hard facts, the imagination has played its part. It was the lure of the imagination that led Copernicus, Kepler, Bacon, Faraday, Darwin, Edison, and Marconi far from the harbors of the partially known, out upon the seas of the unknown, to come back with their ships laden with precious treasures for mankind. And this same lure has sent all of the world's great explorers and discoverers out to win new continents.

Someone has well said that "the imagination is integral with life. Its hand is on the throttle of all human progress; it cradles every invention and maps the route of every social, economic, and intellectual advance; it steeps the brush of the artist and beats the measure for the poet; it brushes the dust

from the pages of history and is a telescope for the culture of civilizations long since passed away. It is coextensive with very existence, for all men in all times have molded their life and thought in its infinite forms."

A Corrupt Imagination

But this power through which man has received the revelation of God, which has been the inspiration of all the arts and sciences, which has led man upward to the heights of achievement in every realm, has also led him down to the very doors of hell. The lure of a healthy imagination is as the breath of life; but the lure of a corrupt imagination leadeth to destruction. Like the other great faculties of our makeup the imagination is extremely sensitive, and it is here that sin most often makes its first attack. We are told of a noted painter who said, "he never dared to look upon a bad picture, because for days afterwards it influenced him so powerfully that he could not paint well."

The imagination can be corrupted, and the lure of a corrupt imagination is one of the most dangerous enemies of the soul. Many, if not all, of our greatest sins, are sins of the imagination. Covetousness, lust, and what Paul calls a reprobate or darkened mind, are all sins of the imagination. The last of the ten commandments warns against covetousness. Jesus also warns against it (Luke 12:15). Both Jesus and James utter warnings against the sin and results of lust (Matt. 5:27-29; James 1:14, 15). The results, and consequences in life, of lust and a reprobate and darkened mind, are vividly set forth by Paul in Romans 1:21-32.

The Bible abounds in stories of lives that have

been led to destruction, or to its verge, by the lure of a corrupt imagination. The story of Lot; the story of David; and the story of Judas, are splendid examples. Lot dreamed of influence, power, and a high life in a great city. His dream brought him to ruin. David dreamed of a beautiful woman who was the wife of another man. His dream brought tragedy and disgrace to his own family and nearly wrecked his kingdom. Judas dreamed of a worldly kingdom in which he should have a place of power and influence, and his dream betrayed the Christ and brought his own career to a tragic end. The story of the prodigal, and tens of thousands like him, is that of the lure of a corrupt imagination.

Conclusion

In a sermon on our text Alexander Maclaren suggests one of the hidden warnings in the incident from which it is taken. "Apparently the picture suggests that these elders knew not the eyes that were looking upon them. They were hugging themselves in the conceit, 'The Lord seeth not, the Lord hath forsaken the earth,' and all the while, all unknown, God and his prophet stand in the doorway and see it all. Not a finger is lifted, not a sign to the foolish worshiper of His presence and inspection, but in stern silence He records and remembers." There is one who knows what we have painted on the walls of our chambers of imagery.

The story is told of a mother's visit to her son's room in his fraternity house in college. The boy did not know she was coming and did not know that she had been in his room. She had found the walls covered with vile and obscene pictures. Before

leaving for home she again stole into his room without his knowledge and hung upon the wall a picture of the Christ. The boy was angry when he first discovered it. But as he began to study that pure, manly face, one by one the vile and obscene pictures began to come down, and only those which were in keeping with the picture of Christ remained.

The only way to cleanse a corrupted imagination is to paint upon its walls pure and lovely pictures. And God who watches in secret, and knows what we have thought and painted, has His own way of saving us. He steals into our chambers of imagery as quietly as a mother and in different ways hangs there the picture of His Son—the Son of His love, Whom He gave to the world—knowing that when men look upon His face they will see the Face of a Father in Whose presence those vile things which corrupt the imagination and lure to destruction, cannot continue to live.

THE FAR COUNTRY

*And * * * gathered all together and took his journey into a far country * * *—Luke 15:13.*

IS a new sermon on the story of the prodigal possible? If it were, it would be unnecessary, for the old story is still new, and its essential message can never be changed. This, however, is not a sermon about the prodigal, but about a vast multitude of modern folk whose picture is clearly and accurately drawn in the story of his life. Leaving aside the general interpretation of the parable we turn our attention to just one expression, that which describes the young man taking his possessions and starting into the far country.

This was not all of the prodigal's sin. But it was the beginning. So far as we can gather from the events of the story he had lived, up to the time of his departure, an industrious and blameless life. Under the protecting roof of his father's house he had done his share of the work necessary to gain certain possessions. He had a perfect right to a part of the possessions he had helped to gain. The father never raised any question on that point. His sin does not lie in the fact that he had possessions, but in the fact that having gained them under the protection of his father's house, he takes them for himself, and turns his back upon his father and home. This was the beginning of his trouble. Going into the far country was the beginning of the end for this boy.

Respectable Backsliders

Thousands all around us have done just what this boy did. Under the protection and influence of the

church of Jesus Christ, and through the practice of the Christian virtues, they have helped to create certain possessions. But when they have become wealthy in power, influence, money or intellectual achievement, they have gathered together their possessions and have taken a journey into the far country. They have deliberately turned their backs upon the church, which has been one of the biggest, if not the supreme factor in their success. These people are respectable backsliders. The church has helped them to win their present position in life—and in the hour of victory it has been forgotten. It has given them business success, it has given them training, it has saved their children, it has guarded them from those deadly sins which keep so many people from the enjoyment of possessions after they are gained—and yet it is no longer worthy of their time and thought and support. These are the citizens of the far country, and we could call many of them by name in every community.

“There is No Difference”

If we dared to class these good people with those men and women who have left the church to sink into the vilest of sins, they would be highly insulted. But there is no difference in the ultimate results. The man who is in the far country of respectable ease and indifference, and heeds not the appeals of the church, is just as far away from God as the man who is in the far country of the lowest vice and sin. The man whose soul has been drugged by little or great possessions will stand before God in the judgment, on the same level with the man whose soul has been drugged through the practice of the lowest sin. “For there is no difference; for all have sinned

and fallen short of the glory of God" (Romans 3: 22, 23).

Perils of the Far Country

The far country is full of perils for its residents. They are the perils common to the backslider. Nowhere in the Bible are they more clearly pictured, or the characteristics of the backslider more distinctly outlined than in the little prophecy of Hosea. Read it and you will be struck with the following expressions concerning the backslider:

"Ephraim shall be desolate in the day of rebuke" (5:8). "Ephraim is oppressed and broken in judgment" (5:11). "They commit falsehood * * * Ephraim compasseth me about with lies" (11:12). "For Israel hath forgotten his Maker and builded palaces * * * " (8:14). "Ephraim feedeth on wind and followeth after the east wind" (12:1). "And Ephraim said, Surely I am become rich, I have found me wealth; in all my labors they shall find in me no iniquity that is sin" (12:8). "When Ephraim spake trembling, he exalted himself" (13:1). "Ephraim is smitten; their root is dried up, they shall bear no more fruit" (9:16).

The residents of the far country are stricken with a certain hardening of the heart which causes them to be unaware of their real danger. They do not feel themselves to be great sinners. Because they have gained possessions they are God's privileged characters. They have reached the stage in their spiritual development when church attendance and the emblems of the Lord's Supper have little to do with their perfection. They do not need these common helps. Jeremiah says of them, "No man repents of his wickedness, saying, What have I done?"

In the end the residents of the far country are always reduced to want. It may not always be the want of material things—such as came to the prodigal—but it is want just the same. It is most often the want of the hunger of the unsatisfied soul. This is a hunger all the possessions in the world cannot satisfy. Sooner or later, and sometimes almost too late, the soul that has known what it means to be in the “Father’s House,” will be hungry for that bread which is served only at the “Father’s table.”

Conclusion

What would happen to the church if all those splendid men and women who have taken their possessions and gone into the far country, would decide to come back home? What would happen if all those who received the beginning of their education, or who have completed that education in the church schools and colleges, would come back to throw the wealth of their knowledge and achievement into the life of the church? What would happen if that great host of sweet singers who received their first training in a church choir would come back to flood the sanctuary with their songs? What would happen if the thousands of mothers and fathers, who received the ideals which have made their lives true, in the church, would come back and bring with them their unchurched children? What would happen if all the men who have made money under the influence and protection of the church would pour out even one-tenth of their treasure before the altar of God? The human soul has always recoiled in the presence of base ingratitude. Could there be any baser ingratitude than this consecration to self of the possessions which God has

made possible? Sincere gratitude honestly expressed has always melted the heart of humanity. What would happen to the heart of the world, that world that has been coldly critical of the church because of the ingratitude of those in the far country, if it should witness them returning to give God and the church their honest dues? If all the non-active and non-affiliated members of the church in every community should decide to return from the far country, the walls of all our churches would be literally pushed out.

And the way back is always open. In the first eight verses of the 14th chapter of Hosea we have God's gracious invitation to the backslider. In the prodigal returning to the Father's house we have a picture of the way God receives those who return from the far country. Some of the saddest words on the pages of Scripture were uttered by Jeremiah after his people had refused to return to Jehovah. In them we have the final sentence, which both God and the laws of the human soul, pass upon those who decide to remain in the far country, "The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved."

THE HEART OF THE FATHER

* * * *God so loved* * * * —*John 3:16.*

JESUS CHRIST expressed the essence of His religion in one all-embracing word, "Father." This was His conception of God. Only a few voices in the long religious history of the race have ever conceived of God in terms of Fatherhood. (Jer. 3:19; Isaiah 63:16; 64:8; Psalm 103:13.) Jesus according to Prof. Kent, "gave to the word, father, a reality and a personal content that made His teaching a new message to men. * * * The foundation of Jesus' teaching about God * * * was the possibility of man's entering into personal relations with his divine Father * * * Jesus placed supreme emphasis upon the love of God, for this quality was fundamental and largely overlooked by the teachers of His day." Jesus not only reveals the Father-God of this universe, but reveals His heart also. "God so loved * * * The Father Himself loveth you * * * " And the disciple who reported most of Jesus' words concerning the love of God, sums it all up by saying, "God is love." After living with the human Jesus and after years in the service of the Risen Christ, this is his verdict.

The supreme need of the world is to know the heart of this Father-God. Jesus declared, "This is eternal life that they might know God * * * " Without a knowledge of God there is no eternal life. In the presence of this fact we ask how this knowledge can be attained. The New Testament has not left the question unanswered. It suggests two supreme ways of knowing this Father whose heart is love.

"I Am the Way"

The first way of approach to the heart of the Father, to a knowledge of this God who is love, is through Jesus Christ. In answer to the questioning soul of a man who wanted to know the Father, Jesus said, "I am the way * * * No man cometh unto the Father except by Me. If ye had known Me ye would have known My Father also." Another anxious soul said, "Lord, show us the Father." And Jesus answered, "He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father." And men who have taken Jesus at His word have not been disappointed.

R. J. Campbell says: "When you have seen the heart of Jesus you have no more to learn about the heart of God: it will be the same as His to all eternity." Sabatier says: "When wearied by the world of pleasure or toil, I long to find my soul again and live a deeper life, I can accept no other God and Master than Jesus Christ, because in Him alone optimism is without frivolity and seriousness without despair." Dr. Fairbairn has said, "Since Jesus lived, God has been another and nearer being to man," and D. S. Cairns voices the conviction "that the mightiest driving impulse of Christianity is not Christ's revelation of the possibilities of humanity, but his revelation of the essential nature of Almighty God, of his kinship with mankind, and of His purpose of redeeming love."

"The real crux comes," says Prof. Glover, "when the question arises in a man's own heart, 'Does God love me?' Jesus says that he does, but it is very hard to believe, except in the company of Jesus and under His influence * * * The central thing it seems to me in His teaching about God is, that God cares

for the individual to an extent far beyond anything we could think possible. If we can wrestle with that central thought and assimilate it, or as the old divines said, appropriate it, make it our own, the rest of the gospel is easy. But one can never manage it except with the help, and in the company of Jesus."

"He That Loveth"

The second way of approach to the heart of the Father is the exercise of love in the human heart. The same disciple who said, "God is love" said in the beginning of the same sentence, "He that loveth not knoweth not God." This is the negative side of the proposition, "He that loveth knoweth God." This same man, John, goes on to say: "If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar; for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, cannot love God whom he hath not seen." James says: "But whoso hath this world's goods and beholdeth his brother in need, and shutteth up his compassion for him, how doth the love of God abide in him?"

Only as we come to love our brother men, the most wretched and needy of them, do we find that love without which it is impossible to know God. All our intellectual achievement, our profession and our formality, is but an empty mockery, unless we have loved our fellows! And what an opportunity there is all about us to find God through love! Oh ye who have been searching in creed and dogma, open your heart to the cries of millions of your fellow-beings whose lives are going out in misery, starvation and sin; share with them the money that is

eating like a canker into your own soul, and lo, in this impulse of unselfish love you will see your Father in heaven!

Conclusion

This is the knowledge of God that means eternal life. To see His face and feel the throb of His loving heart in a great Personality like Jesus, and to discover through the exercise of the passion of love in our own hearts the Divine in the human. This is a practical knowledge of God and a way into His presence which all men can travel if they will.

The atheism that drives men away from the church today and causes them to ignore God is a practical atheism. Men are not denying God with their heads. They are not producing intellectual arguments against God. They are denying God in their wicked hearts and godless lives. It is not the head but the heart that is leading most men astray.

If this be true, an intellectual argument will never win them back. We must appeal to the heart as well as the head. Emotionalism or not, call it what you please; the fact remains that the stubborn hearts of men must be melted by a great love before this practical atheism will depart. They will more surely find the way to God through such a Personality as the Jesus of the Gospels, and through the practice of unselfish love toward their fellows. When we make it possible for Jesus to break through the walls which theology has built around Him, and let men see Him for what he really is, He will draw all men unto Himself. And when we inspire men to open their hearts to really love and serve their fellows, we will have brought the world a long ways toward God.

We seem so far away from God that it looks like an impossible ideal to say we may know Him. And what has been said is perhaps true, that "no one will ever be entirely satisfied with his attainments in his outreach for God." But as Edwin Markham has expressed it in one of his poems, we can all begin.

"The builder who first bridged Niagara's gorge,
Before he swung his cable, shore to shore,
Sent out across the gulf his venturing kite
Bearing an unseen cord for unseen hands
To grasp upon the further cliff and draw
A greater cord, and then a greater yet:
Till at last across the chasm swung
The cable—then the mighty bridge in air!

"So we may send our little timid thought
Across the void, out to God's reaching hands—
Send out our love and faith to thread the deep—
Thought after thought until the little cord
Has greatened to a chain no chance can break,
And, we are anchored to the Infinite!"

Are we anchored to the Infinite? Do we know God and His great Father heart in an intimate way? If not, let us hear the words of Jesus, "I am the way," and the call of a world that needs our love, and begin to come into that knowledge.

THE ONLY ESCAPE

* * * *how shall we escape, if we neglect so great a salvation?—Hebrews 2:3.*

THE key word to Hebrews is "better." Better promises, better sacrifice, better Mediator, better spirit, better salvation, and better rewards.

Greatness of the Salvation Through Christ

The word of Christ is greater than that of angels. His own sacrifice, which was voluntary, and with his whole heart, affected psychological conditions in a way that could not be done through the sacrifice of animals. His priesthood was perpetual—after the order of Melchizedek—hence an eternal Mediator, Intercessor, at the right hand of God, for the salvation of those whose nature he bore. The salvation of the old covenant was principally geographical, physical, material. Its punishments and rewards were largely temporal. The salvation offered by Christ in the terms of the new covenant is mental, inward, of the heart, and has to do with the rescue of the whole personality from the dominion and power of sin. It abides. Death has no power over it.

There is "in strictness but one religion," says Dr. A. H. Strong. "False religions are caricatures which men give to sin, or the imaginations which men groping after light, form of this life of the soul in God." "If Christianity be true," says Peabody, "it is not *a* religion, but *the* religion. If Judaism be also true, it is not as distinct from but as coincident with Christianity, the one religion to which it can bear only the relation of a part to the whole. If

there be portions of truth in other religious systems, they are not portions of other religions, but portions of the one religion which somehow or other became incorporated with fables and falsities." John Caird said: "You can never get at the true idea or essence of religion merely by trying to find out something that is common to all religions; and it is not the lower religions that explain the higher, but conversely the higher religion explains all the lower religions." Once more, George P. Fisher says: "The recognition of certain elements of truth in the ethnic religions does not mean that Christianity has defects which are to be repaired by borrowing from them; it only means that the ethnic faiths have in fragments what Christianity has as a whole. Comparative religion does not bring to Christianity new truth; it provides illustrations of how Christian truth meets human needs and aspirations, and gives a full vision of that which the most spiritual and gifted among the heathen only dimly discern."

It follows, then, that there is no way of escape except through Christ. He was the embodiment and completeness of the true religion. Neither in this world, nor the next, is there salvation without him. "For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the increase of His government there shall be no end" (Isa. 9:6, 7).

Danger of Neglect

"It is the neglected wheel that capsizes the vehicle," says a writer, "and maims for life the passengers. It is the neglected leak that sinks the ship. It is

the neglected field that yields briars instead of bread. It is the neglected spark near the magazine whose explosion sends hundreds of mangled wretches into eternity. The neglect of an officer to throw up a rocket on a certain night caused the fall of Antwerp, and postponed the deliverance of Holland for twenty or more years. The neglect of a sentinel to give the alarm hindered the fall of Sebastopol, and resulted in the loss of many thousand lives." And by sheer neglect a soul may be lost.

Use or lose is a principle that runs through life, both natural and spiritual. A number of illustrations may be taken from nature. Thus in an extinct genus of bird, *Dinornis*, the wings were reduced to such an extent as to leave it still doubtful whether so much as the tiny rudiment was present in all the species. The *Apteryx* is another case in point. It still exists in New Zealand; but has no wings. The naturalist gives this explanation: "Upon this island there are no four-footed enemies—either existing or extinct—to escape from which the wings of birds would be of any service. Consequently we can understand why on this island we should meet with such a remarkable dwindling away of wings." Here we have loss through the lack of stimulus for activity.

The soul may be lost also through inactivity. It has every reason for being active. It is offered the greatest boon that can be offered—salvation from all soul-destroying forces. But it may be lost by sheer neglect of an active existence, and its Godlike potentialities be withered and blasted forever. The soul must be "exercised unto godliness" if it would live and flourish in immortal vigor.

A Solemn Question

It is reported that many years ago a Welsh minister, beginning his sermon, leaned over the pulpit and said with much solemnity: "Friends, I have a question to ask. I cannot answer it. You cannot answer it. If a devil from hell were here he could not answer it." The congregation became death-like in its stillness. Every eye was fixed upon the speaker. He proceeded: "The question is this, 'How shall we escape, if we neglect so great a salvation?' " Not by money, nor social standing, nor political influence, nor knowledge, nor ignorance, nor pleasure. There is not now a way of escape, nor can there ever be, save through the great salvation offered by Jesus Christ; "for neither is there any other name under heaven, that is given among men, wherein we must be saved" (Acts 4:12).

All Roads Closed

Recently the Honorable Winston Churchill, a member of the British Cabinet, was on his way to see the Prime Minister, when he was accosted by a guard. In vain did he argue his case, the guard had strict orders to close the approaches to the Prime Minister's home. It was necessary for the cabinet member to get in touch with his chief by telephone; whereupon orders were issued to the guards to permit the honorable member to pass to and fro at will. And he who would pass into the upper realm where Christ is, will find all roads closed, all entrances barred, unless he has been able to establish a personal relationship with the Son of God.

THE MAN JESUS CALLED A FOOL

So is he that layeth up treasure for himself and is not rich toward God.—Luke 12:21.

THE parable in which our text is found was thrown in as a part of a conversation which Jesus had with his disciples concerning covetousness. A man out of the multitude had made this request, "Teacher, tell my brother to give me my share of our inheritance." After telling the man that he is no judge in such matters, and warning His disciples of the dangers of covetousness, He tells the story of the rich man.

The man Jesus called a fool is not the man mentioned in this parable. It was God who called this man a fool. The man Jesus called a fool is any man, every man, who is like "the certain rich man" in that he is busy laying up treasure for himself and is not rich toward God. Jesus did not speak hastily or unadvisedly. He knew what He was saying. He knew the tendencies and temptations of the human soul in the presence of material things. He knew the power of selfishness and greed. He used strong language only when he thought the case demanded it. The word translated fool is a strong word. Its literal meaning is, an utterly senseless man. Not in the sense that he has no brains, but that he does not use what he has. He was, therefore, passing a most severe judgment upon any man, who, like the rich man in the parable, has left God out of his thinking and plans. Because the world is full of just such utterly foolish and senseless people, this parable and the warning of Jesus has lost none of its meaning.

What is the Matter With the World?

What is the matter with the world? "It is an uncomfortable world—uneasy, distraught; its nations are in turmoil, its inhabitants distressed by class strife and interrupted industry. Their living is hard, their necessities costly, their future insecure. What is the trouble? Many voices answer. One says, the waste of war makes the world poor; its stores are depleted; its governments are in debt; mankind feels the pinch of want. This is more than plausible; we know it is true. Another says, the suffering of war has affected the emotional life of humanity; society is unbalanced and unstrung; the strain and shock of the great conflict was more than human nature can stand. This is reasonable. Others explain to us that the financing of the war inflated currency so as to make prices abnormally large, to the hurt of all whose income has not increased proportionately * * * These are all good reasons. But they are superficial. Certain far-reaching and deep-seated spiritual defects brought them about. The unrest, the economic misery, the social peril, cannot be permanently healed unless these spiritual defects are removed." And in this parable of the rich man we see clearly outlined the sins which are responsible for these defects.

Three Glaring Sins of Our Age

Three of the most glaring sins of our age are mirrored in this parable. First, the sin of greed and hoarding. Second, the sin of shirking and nonproduction. Third, the sin of self-indulgence and wastefulness.

"I will pull down my barns and build greater ones." This is the creed of the hoarder. It is the

creed of thousands of old men and young men who are after a mint of money, and after it in all kinds of ungodly ways. This sin has completely killed the souls of thousands of our finest citizens, and filled their minds with false ideals.

"Soul, take thine ease." This is the creed of the non-producer. It is the natural sequence of hoarding. When I have made my stake, when I have made a fortune, when my barns are full, when I have paid for my farm, then, I will become a non-producer. I will let the rest of the world do the work. We cannot question the right of a man to make his fortune. But we observe that the law which was given to the race in the very beginning of its history, "that in the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat thy bread" has never been abrogated. When human society reaches a stage in its evolution when one class ceases to work and begins to live off of the work of another class, it has reached a stage of trouble. No man has a right, while his body and mind is strong, to become a non-producer.

"Eat, drink, and be merry." This is the creed of the waster, the man who has hoarded and decided to quit work. And this is the most dangerous sin of all. A class of people in society who have the money and the inclination to take life easy and eat, drink and make merry all the time, are breeders of unrest and trouble. The man who works hard every day for the bare necessities of life, will never be quite content to keep still so long as he sees wasted in foolish pleasures that which he knows is needful for the masses of the people. So long as the idle rich persist in employing men to haul their pet dogs around in an expensive automobile, there will be some laboring man who will persist, whether justly

or unjustly, in throwing a brick through the window of that car.

Conclusion

These are the sins which lead to that poverty of soul which Jesus says brands a man as a fool. In his "The Rise of a Soul," Dr. James I. Vance has a fine chapter which he calls, "The Terminals of Love." He says, "One travels toward the thing he loves, slowly it may be, but surely; drawn thither by an unseen but irresistible force. The terminals of love are the things loved. Man goes where his heart is. He becomes what he worships. He grows into the image and likeness of that which he adores * * *

The nation whose chief question is: 'How much is a man worth?' will become a huge stock exchange and its people a race of money grabbers * * *

The man who deliberately sells himself to dishonesty, impurity, lasciviousness, and sordid greed, will turn to the thing for which he has perjured his soul * * *

The heart which entertains unclean imaginations and vile suggestions and which delights in and loves these abominations will become as foul as its filthy tenants. The terminal of a wicked love is a wicked character. An unholy love drives toward depravity of soul and degradation of life as resistlessly as the catapult projects its missile or the cannon hurls its conquering shot." When the sins of hoarding, ease, and self-indulgence take possession of the soul, men inevitably become poverty-stricken toward God.

And for those who are in danger of this soul-poverty there is a more serious message in this parable. "This night is thy soul required of thee * * *

" At the very moment when this rich man

was congratulating his soul on its wonderful future, death had already laid its hand upon him. How terrible, to be taken out of the arrogance of these sins, unthinking, and in an instant into the presence of God!

Speaking of the warning of this parable Henry Ward Beecher said, "When I was a lad, the old bell in the belfry used to ring a knell the sound of which I could not get out of my head for a month after hearing it. A young companion of mine died when I was absent at school, and I came back on the day of his funeral and heard that bell toll. And what tolling that was of the old New England belfries! How the sound reverberated, and rocked and rolled, and clung to the air as if it never would die out! How that old bell filled the whole air full, ringing and ringing out the solemn tidings of mortality! Oh that there might be some ringings from out the belfry of God's heart that should fill the whole air of our thoughts and feelings in the same way! And if there be one stroke, if there be one bell whose tongue should more than another syllable to us lessons of instruction, it seems to me to be this, 'So is every man that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God.' "

THE FATALITY OF COMPROMISE

* * * *I will surely rend the kingdom from thee, and will give it to thy servant.—I Kings 11:11.*

THESE words picture the sad climax of what promised to be a brilliant and successful career. No young man ever faced life with greater opportunities of success than did Solomon. "He was David's favorite son, by the woman for whose beauty David had staked his crown; reared in all integrity and wisdom; loved by the intensity of a woman, who, by loving, would make atonement for her sin; heir presumptive to a throne at its greatest power and splendor. All stars seemed kind * * * Yet the closing chapters of his life are full of gloom and terror * * * All the rich melody of his early life died out into a moan. The cups he drained held more dregs than nectar. Eventide belied the rosy promise of the morning." (Geo. C. Peck.)

The sin which brought Solomon to the reaping time, which caused him to hear this sentence from the lips of Jehovah, was the sin of compromise. He had "split differences with sin." He had violated his vows to Jehovah to please his foreign wives. "He had adopted the spirit of compromise, and he lost his way through compromise. Great stalwart figure that he was, he met defeat, not in the open struggle, but by the insidious poison of compromise."

Compromise or Decision

Because this spirit has always brought men to ruin, and because it is very active in our age, we may

well learn a lesson from the tragic ending of this promising career. There are two dominant spirits which guide men's lives—the spirit of compromise and the spirit of decision. In the very beginning of His ministry Jesus set these two spirits in contrast: “No man can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other; or else he will hold to one and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon.”

In his “Fundamental Questions,” Henry Churchill King has a chapter on “The Question of Life's Fundamental Decision,” in which he points out the fact that for every individual, life must at every point, be one of two things: We must choose between a life of drifting or steering. Shall we allow our life to be simply a part of the mass, the crowd, or shall we guide it into the better ways? To drift is to compromise; to steer is to make some firm decisions.

We must choose between domination by feeling or by rational purpose. To live by feeling alone is to compromise in the face of some of life's supreme decisions; but to have a rational purpose back of our actions is the result of right decisions.

We must choose between a life of loyalty or disloyalty; between fidelity or treachery to our friends, our God, and the best we know. The path to disloyalty is always the path of compromise. To be true to our conscience at all times means that we have mastered the power to decide.

We must choose between the Father or the love of the world. Far back in the history of Christianity we find a Christian pastor speaking these words: “Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of

the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the vain glory of life, is not of the Father but of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof; but he that doeth the will of the Father abideth forever." So runs this fundamental contrast through all life, and each one of us must continually face the alternative of compromise or decision.

Compromise Always Fatal

In the end compromise, when it has to do with the great moral issues of life and duty, is always fatal. When Wolsey was cast aside by the king for whom he had compromised his soul, his bitter cry was, "Would that I had served my God as faithfully as I have served my king." It is the cry of those who have served mammon instead of God and who have been cast aside as moral and spiritual wrecks, or crushed beneath its mighty wheels. When men who are responsible for the destinies of nations, have compromised in the face of some crisis, the results have been the same. It is said of Louis the king, that just before the French Revolution he met one day near his palace a peasant carrying a rude coffin. "What died the man of?" he asked. The peasant replied, "Of hunger, sire." This meant nothing to a king who was rolling in luxury. He soon forgot. But he remembered, when only a few months later, he stood upon the scaffold and looked into a sea of faces that knew no pity. Carlyle tells how Foulon was once asked how the starving populace were to live, and replied brutally, "Let them eat grass." His compromise in the face of the need of the people ended with a parade through the streets of

Paris with his own head held high on a bloody pole and his ghastly mouth stuffed full of grass. To sow compromise is to reap a harvest of destruction.

Conclusion

There is an account of an old New England blacksmith who made chains for his living. His rule was, "Seven links a day, and each link the anchor of a thousand souls." One day a new process was proposed to him whereby he could make "ten links a day and safe." He refused to listen. Others might, but not he.

The years passed. The old blacksmith died and was almost forgotten. But one day a great ship was plowing its way across the ocean. A storm with its relentless waves was upon it. Sharp and clear comes the command, "Cast out the first anchor." Over the sides it goes with its great chain following it. The anchor holds, the chain grows taut, and then, under the weight of an oncoming billow it snaps like a thread. "Cast out the second anchor," is the captain's call. The call is obeyed, and down into the mad sea the anchor chain rushes like a huge serpent; while the vessel rocks and shivers. The second anchor holds, but for a moment only. The chain stiffens like a rod of steel, and like tow touched by fire it parts in twain, and the great ship is adrift again. "Cast out the reserve anchor," the captain calls again. And the third great chain glides into the seething water. Will it stand the strain of the stormy sea—for anxious lives are welded into the links of this last chain? The chain grows taut, it stands the strain, it holds—the maddened waves are powerless to break one link and the twelve hundred souls on board are safe. It was

the chain of the old blacksmith, "Seven links a day, and each link the anchor of a thousand souls."

You may have been playing safe with your soul. That is not enough. Some day you will need something to hold you, and when the storms come and you have cast out all those anchors and chains which seem to hold you securely now, and have seen them break one after another, you will need a reserve anchor with a chain strong enough to defy the greatest storm. Saved and not safe is the word you will want to hear then. Jesus Christ is the reserve anchor which every man needs. His call is a call to a decision.

Choose now whether you will be a disciple of his or not. Choose whether you will make the principles of his teaching the established convictions of your soul and live up to them. There are times and seasons of the soul. The Spirit of God strives with men and urges a decision for Christ and righteousness. The spiritual instincts in every soul struggle to be expressed when they hear the call of the Spirit. To repress them is to quench the Spirit. Many a human heart is a grave-yard full of the dust of beautiful thoughts and resolutions which have been put to death through compromise and lack of decision. Which shall it be—compromise or decision?

SAND OR ROCK

*Every one therefore that heareth these words of mine, and doeth them, shall be likened unto a wise man, who built his house upon the rock: * * * And every one that heareth these words of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, who built his house upon the sand.—Matthew 7:24-27.*

ALL men are builders. Builders are of two general classes—those who build for time only, and those who build for eternity. The former build upon the sand, and the latter upon the rock.

Things Common to All Builders

They share the desire for a building. It is a refuge, a shelter in a time of storm. Then there are plans in harmony with the purpose of each builder. Each one makes choice of his own foundation. Each becomes active in the building enterprise; and the result is much similarity, in outward appearances at least, of the structures.

But There are Serious Differences

They placed different estimates upon the future. One built for the present only. The long future did not enter seriously into his calculations. It is said that when the temple of Minerva was erected at Athens, all sculptors were invited to compete in the carving of a great statue for its dome. On the day of the award a famous artist brought his work, a life-size statue of the goddess, so beautiful that it was received with acclamations of delight. But as it was raised to its place it grew smaller and smaller, until it seemed but a speck against the sky. The

work of the poor mechanic was then unveiled, huge and uncouth; but as it was raised aloft its deformities vanished and it seemed more and more comely, until, reaching the dome, it took the very semblance of the goddess, and seemed animate with life. Thus if our work, our building, is only life-size; if we have measured only by the requirements of time and sense; how it will dwindle as it approaches eternity. But on the other hand, how it will become glorious, if we have wrought with eternity in view.

It is easy to conceive of the man who built upon the sand as building more quickly than the one who digged deep to find the rock. It takes time and patience to build an enduring structure. The pyramids were centuries in building. They are with us today. It takes a man many years longer to reach maturity than it does an animal. He is of finer texture, and consequently of slower growth. It is comparatively easy to throw a structure together in any sort of fashion regardless of the foundation upon which it rests. It takes trouble to seek the hidden rock that will make it secure. Many Christians fail because thought, prayer, guidance, require effort, and they are not willing to pay the price.

It is often difficult to distinguish the real Christian from the man of the world. Their outward appearance may be much the same. Their differences are mainly hidden in their hearts, just as the two foundations lay out of sight; but one reached down to the rock, while the other rested upon the shifting sand. The Christian's life is hid with Christ in God.

The Universal Testing

The buildings were subjected to the severest tests, and from every direction. They were tried from

beneath, for "the floods came"; from above, for "the rain descended;" and from the side, for "the winds blew." No superstructure insecurely based could stand against such fearful trials.

Dr. Charles Reynolds Brown vividly describes the behavior of the Spreckels Building, San Francisco, during the earthquake in 1906. It is a tower-like structure, slender, square in form, eighteen stories high, and seemingly, for such a building, not sufficiently based. Scientific men estimated that the swaying of the building "carried the center of the gravity beyond the base line many times during those fearful forty-eight seconds." But the builder was a man of experience and wisdom who "dug deep and laid the foundations" so solidly into and upon the rock,—not upon the loose sand that underlies so much of the city,—that when the 18th of April came testing every man's work the huge steel frame supported the swaying building for it was founded upon a rock. No life that is not sincerely rooted and grounded in Jesus Christ can withstand the fearful onslaughts of evil in time, and triumph in the end over the darkness that guards the gateway to eternity.

Many who have trusted all to the shifting sands of this life have been compelled to acknowledge their mistake only when it was too late. The last words of Gibbon were, "All is dark and doubtful." The philosopher Thomas Hobbs said, "I am taking a fearful leap in the dark." Mirabeau exclaimed, "Give me more laudanum that I may not think of eternity."

But those who built upon the foundation of God and his Christ were strengthened when the floods were out. Paul could say, "I have fought a good

fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith: henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give to me at that day." Fuller could say, "I have such a hope that with it I can plunge into eternity." Philip Sidney, drawing near to the other shore, exclaimed, "I would not exchange my joys for the empires of the world." And as Cookman felt "the tide which drew from out the boundless deep turn again home," he cried, "I am sweeping through the gates washed in the blood of the Lamb." When the last test came to Dwight L. Moody, he said, "Is this dying? Why this is bliss. There is no valley. I have been within the gates. Earth is receding; heaven is opening; God is calling; I must go."

"On Christ the solid rock I stand,
All other ground is sinking sand."

WHAT WE MAY DO TO THE HOLY SPIRIT

Ye stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Spirit: as your fathers did, so do ye.—Acts 7:51.

THE Scriptures plainly teach that we may, in certain ways, affect the Holy Spirit. He is a person as well as an influence. He thinks, feels, and wills. The human spirit does the same. Hence personalities produce effects on each other for good or ill. The human spirit, in its personality, may resist the divine Spirit in its personality; but it must be constantly borne in mind that our spirits are finite, and weak in willing, while the Holy is infinite, and mighty to do the will of God.

There are a number of things set forth in the Bible that we may do to the Holy Spirit.

We May Resist the Holy Spirit

The martyr Stephen charged the Jews and their fathers with *resisting* the Holy Spirit; and Paul charged that “men of corrupt mind reprobate concerning the faith” also “resist the truth” (2 Tim. 3:8). God will not overpower us. He respects our freedom. He knows that coercion would be of no avail. If there is to be any moral and spiritual quality in our act of acceptance, it must be free and untrammelled in its choice. Hence it will always be possible to reject the Spirit, for we are men and not brutes. It is better to be free, with even such a dread possibility before us, than to be unfree in doing what is right. Of course man refuses the highest freedom and the greatest satisfactions when he rejects the Spirit of God; but, if he prefers the broad way that leadeth to destruction, he must abide

the consequences of his choice. It is thus dreadful, death-dealing, to resist, to put away from us, the wooing, sympathetic, life-giving Spirit of God.

We May Insult the Holy Spirit

In the Hebrew letter we have this solemn warning: "A man that hath set at nought Moses' law dieth without compassion on the word of two or three witnesses: of how much sorer punishment, think ye, shall he be judged worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant wherewith he was sanctified an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace" (Heb. 10:28, 29). Both Weymouth and Moffatt, in their respective versions of the New Testament, substitute "insulted" for "despite." It is possible, therefore, for human nature to become so low as to actually "insult the Spirit of grace." It is the office of sin to bring us to this deplorable state. All sanctity and all holiness gone. We have "outraged the Spirit of love." We have fallen from celestial heights and joined with the hissing serpents of the pit.

We May Grieve the Holy Spirit

We are exhorted to "Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God in whom ye were sealed unto the day of redemption" (Eph. 4:30). Isaiah speaks of those who "rebelled and grieved his Holy Spirit" (Isa. 63:10). There seems no way to vivify this thought in our minds, save by thinking of the wayward son upon whom his parents have lavished the wealth of their affection, and for whom they have made every sacrifice, and opened to him the door of every possible opportunity, and yet in spite of it all he disappoints them by his waywardness, lack of responsibility,

and base ingratitude "sharper than a serpent's tooth." He grieves them at their hearts. So it is with the Spirit of God. We refuse his fellowship, his love, his gifts and his power of an endless life. In all our afflictions he is afflicted with us; yet we are cold, inconsiderate, ungrateful, unmoved, and self-sufficient. Thus we grieve the Holy Spirit of God.

We May Quench the Holy Spirit

A new enthusiasm in behalf of humanity was born in the hearts of men on the day that the Holy Spirit descended upon the disciples in the city of Jerusalem. It was an enthusiasm for holiness and a more abundant life. A new truth, especially a new *felt* truth, was the basis of this new enthusiasm. Henceforth men were to be baptized in the Holy Spirit and in fire (Matt. 3:11). "Every great movement," says Dr. John Watson, "which has stirred the depth of life and changed the face of history has sprung from some profound sentiment and powerful emotion." "Elevation of character depends upon warmth of affection," says Dr. Jowett. "A fiery heart by the energy of its own heat creates a self-preserving atmosphere against the devil." It is the mission of the Holy Spirit to create a new fire, a new passion in the heart. He should have His way with us. But men are afraid that He will lead them into a life that will be an embarrassment in the presence of their friends, and cause them to be denominated as "queer." Hence they "quench" the flame of the Spirit. But Paul exhorts us to "never quench the fire of the Spirit" (1 Thess. 5:19). It is dangerous. The fire may go out, and the new passion for the righteousness of God and the salvation of humanity become a dead cinder.

We May Blaspheme the Holy Spirit

Here are two Scriptures that have very solemn import: "Every sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men; but the blasphemy against the Spirit shall not be forgiven" (Matt. 12:31). "Who-soever shall blaspheme against the Holy Spirit hath never forgiveness, but is guilty of an eternal sin" (Mark 3:29). The hasty, superficial, prejudiced word against Christ, or even against the Holy Spirit, or the Father, may have forgiveness; but to deliberately, intentionally, utter a calumny against the good spirit of God indicates an impediment in the inward self that precludes the idea of healing, restoration, forgiveness, and hence is an eternal sin. "Either make the tree good and its fruit good," says Jesus in this connection, "or make the tree rotten and its fruit rotten; for the tree is known by its fruit. You brood of vipers, how can you speak good when you are evil? For the mouth utters what the heart is full of" (Moffatt's translation). The eternal sin against the Holy Spirit, therefore, seems confined to those whose natures are so at one with the evil, with sin, that they are incapable of renewal by the power of God.

"A tenderer light than moon or sun,
Than song of earth a sweeter hymn,
May shine and sound forever on,
And thou be deaf and dim.

"Forever round the Mercy-seat
The guiding lights of love shall burn;
But what, if habit-bound, thy feet
Should lack the will to turn?"

OUT OF HARMONY

Now the spirit of Jehovah departed from Saul, and an evil spirit from Jehovah troubled him.—I Sam. 16:14.

“**N**O man is so desolate, even in the midst of crowding duties and many friends, as the man who is conscious that the fellowship which he once had with God is now broken. Apart from God, any one, even the most prominent among his fellows, is singularly and pitifully alone. There is profound pathos in the search of Saul’s servants for harmonies that would replace the discord of his life.”

Few men have had greater opportunities in life than king Saul. His position as king came without any self-seeking. In the beginning of his reign he enjoyed the friendship and guidance of one of the greatest of God’s prophets. But Saul failed. It is the tragedy of his failure, and the reasons for it that suggest our message.

Out of Harmony

Saul was out of harmony with his God. He had committed a great sin. He had ignored the sanctions of religion and had determined to run his government to please himself. There were two prevailing parties in Israel at this time; the religious party under the leadership of the prophet Samuel, and the political or military party. Saul came into power through the religious party, and was the favorite of Samuel. For a time he was true to the ideals of this party. His break with Samuel came when he listened to the military party and revealed the dis-

obedience of his soul to Jehovah. And, when Saul ignored the sanctions of religion, the spirit of Jehovah departed from him.

When he realized what had happened instead of seeking to restore that harmony through a confession of his sin and repentance, he sought methods which were suggested to him by his servants. They were sure they had a cure for his troubles, and David is brought in with his harp. For a time this seems to have caused the evil spirit to depart, but that Saul found no permanent relief through this method we know from what followed.

There are few more pathetic pictures than the accounts of Saul's terrible jealousy toward David and his almost insane ravings. His life closes with a tragedy. Dr. Geo. A. Gordon has pictured it thus: "The last time we see Saul is the night before his final battle on the great plain of Esdraelon, at the foot of the mountains of Gilboa. The passage in the Bible descriptive of that night is one of the most impressive and powerful in the literature of the world. You see this magnificent man, whose nature has been distorted, who has become jealous, cruel, insane, confronted with a vast crisis in the national life, with his enemies embattled there against him; he is conscious that his army is demoralized and unfit to meet the enemy on the morrow; he returns to the morning of his life, when he spoke with the prophet and communed with him on the house-top in the spring of the day, and went away in royal strength and hope. He remembers that there is a poor witch at Endor spared from the general persecution, and in the darkness of the night he makes his way to consult, through this poor impostor, the soul of the dead Samuel. * * * He staggers out

of the witch's home to the field of battle in the morning, and there he dies. The glorious idealist broken in defeat, and his death a symbol of the degeneration of his life. Shakespeare tells the tragic tale in his great words:

'Full many a glorious morning have I seen
Flatter the mountain-tops with sovereign eye,
Kissing with golden face the meadows green,
Gilding pale streams with heavenly alchemy;
Anon permit the basest clouds to ride
With ugly rack upon his celestial face,
And from the forlorn world his visage hide,
Stealing unseen to west with his disgrace.'

This is the way Saul went, 'Stealing unseen to west with his disgrace.' "

A Picture of Modern Life

Is not this tragic picture of Saul an accurate picture of thousands in our modern life? At the bottom of much, if not all, of our restlessness and nervousness is the tremendous fact that our fellowship with God has been broken; that we are out of harmony with our Father in Heaven.

And the reason is the same. We have ignored the sanctions of religion. We have become too busy, or too rich, or too cultured, or too mean to attend church. We have taken things into our own hands. There is nothing more evident in our modern life than the fact, that respect for authority that finds its source outside ourselves, is on the wane. We are becoming laws unto ourselves. We have decided to ignore God and take a wild chance.

And when people begin to feel what has hap-

pened they do just as Saul did. Some one always has a suggestion. There are many agencies in the world which bid for an opportunity to restore the harmonies of the soul. This largely accounts for our pleasure craze. People go to the movies to quiet their nerves. Some blood-and-thunder-wild-west production is so much more soothing than the church service. They must go to the parks and a thousand other places to rest their souls. There is no rest for them in the house of God. The mad rush for the lighter things of life is evidence that many are trying to replace the discord in their lives which has come because they are out of touch with God.

And in the hour of calamity and the loss of loved ones, people are turning, as Saul did, to those impostors who claim to have discovered a short-cut to heaven and to communion with the spirits of the dead. Spiritism is the last desperate attempt of thousands to restore the lost harmonies of their souls.

The Great Harmonizer

There is nothing in the pleasures and attractions of this world that can restore the fellowship of a soul with God. Jesus Christ was, and still is the great harmonizer, the great reconciler. We can do no better here than study two passages from Paul, who was the apostle of reconciliation. (Romans 5:1-11; 8:31-39; 2 Cor. 5:17-21.)

Conclusion

R. J. Campbell closes one of his heart-searching sermons with the following illustration and appeal: "In a certain village in Germany there lived an old blind organist, who had formerly been a musician

of promise, but he had become too feeble to play, and his organ had also fallen into disuse. All that he himself could get out of it were poor, wailing, discordant sounds, trembling and uncertain as the touch of his aged hands. After a time people began to laugh at him and regard his organ as a useless thing. * * * But one day a stranger came into that village to give a recital upon the grand new organ in the public hall. It was the great master Sebastian Bach. Tremblingly, the old man sought him, despite the rebuffs of the crowd, and begged him to come and play one symphony upon his old instrument. He did so; and it is said that music of a more ravishing sweetness was drawn from that battered organ than had been produced on the new one or had ever previously proceeded from the old. It was like a resurrection—yea, a transfiguration. All those years that organ had been waiting for its master and had found him at last. * * *

“Oh, losers in the battle of life! Oh, soiled and desecrated temples of the Holy Ghost! Have you indeed failed in spirit so that divine melody issues from your heart no more? What criest thou, O soul?—

‘Yet with hands by evil stained,
And an ear by discord pained,
I am groping for the keys
Of the heavenly harmonies.’

Lo, ‘Jesus of Nazareth passing by! Behold the Master hand that can summon new music from your weary heart. Behold the Mighty One Who can in-breathe a new spirit to your dead hopes and withered aims. ‘Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world.’ ”

REFUSING A GREAT INVITATION

* * * *And he went away sorrowful: for he was one that had great possessions.—Mark 10:22.*

And he said unto him, I will not go; but I will depart to mine own land and to my kindred.—Numbers 10:30.

BOTH of these texts contain refusals of a great invitation. In the first we have the words of a certain young man who came to Jesus seeking eternal life. As he told the simple story of his blameless character under the law, Jesus looked on him and loved him. But the keen eye of the Master immediately saw the trouble and placed his finger on the weak spot in this otherwise noble character. He had great possessions, and the invitation of Jesus struck at the very roots of his life: "One thing thou lackest: go, sell whatsoever thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come, follow me." The young man's countenance fell, he was wedded to his possessions, he could not face the acid test; so he refused the great invitation to use his possessions in a worthy cause.

Our second text comes from one of those obscure chapters which record the wanderings of the Hebrew people on their way to the promised land. It introduces a character who is utterly unknown to most people, and who, perhaps, would never have been mentioned had he not come in contact with Moses. The tribes, under their leader Moses, had received orders to march. They were going into a strange territory. Moses was on the lookout for a man who could act as a guide for them through this

strange land. He selected Hobab and said to him, "Come with us and we will do thee good. * * *" Hobab refused this invitation. Moses appeals to him again, "Leave us not I pray thee; forasmuch as thou knowest how we are to encamp in the wilderness, and thou shalt be to us instead of eyes." The implication is that Hobab was acquainted with this strange land into which Moses was to lead his people. But there is no record that this second appeal was successful. So far as we know Hobab did not accept the invitation.

Two Types of Men

The biography of these two characters is short; but enough is given to tell us what they were. The young man, while according to the law his life was blameless, was wedded to his possessions. The other man, so far as the record goes, may not have been rich in material possessions, but he had something else which was of infinite value to Moses. He had a knowledge concerning the land into which Moses must lead his people, and he had an insight into its difficulties. Here we have two types of men represented, both with valuable possessions. And in the incidents from which our texts are taken we have suggested the appeal and invitation of the church to these two types of men.

To the man who has possessions, and who is wedded to them, the church has a two-fold invitation. It invites him for his own sake. The man with possessions needs the church and the opportunity which its work offers for the investment of his possessions. He needs the church for the salvation of his soul. "How hardly," says Jesus, "shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God!"

The only agency that has ever broken the soul-destroying grip which possessions get on a man is religion. Then, the church invites this man for its own sake. It has need for his possessions after they have been consecrated to God. The church has a perfect right to seek possessions if it first seeks the souls of the men who hold them. To show a man how, through the church, he can serve thousands with his possessions, and bring real joy and peace of mind to himself, is a noble piece of work.

And to the man who has special knowledge of certain areas of human life and experience, through which it must travel on its long journey, the church also has a two-fold invitation. He is invited first for his own sake. To the physiologist and biologist, the psychologist and educator, the sociologist and economist, the chemist, the philosopher, the poet, the historian—any man who is at home in any special field, and whose insight has made him aware of its difficulties, the church says, "Come with us and we will do thee good." One of the gravest dangers of any specialized knowledge is that it shall lose, or never get, the spiritual point of view. For all these men the church has a point of view and a standard of values which they need. But the church also invites these men for its own sake. No fields of human thought and activity should be closed to the church. Its mission is as broad as humanity. These specialists can be as eyes to the church in its endeavors to serve the whole man. When the church enters the realm of education it needs trained educators. When it tries to still the troubled social and economic waters it needs special insight. When it seeks to unite religion and good health it needs the eyes of trained men. When it advocates pure

food and water it needs the chemist. When it would probe the deeps of the mind and the heart, or understand the past, it needs the philosopher and poet and historian.

The Right of the Church

Why should the church presume to invite these men, to tell them of their need of its message, and of its need of their possessions and knowledge? Because, first of all, the church is a divine institution. Other institutions offer much that can help men, and lay claim to their possessions and knowledge; but they get their power and inspiration from men. Not so with the church—its inspiration and power is of God. Other institutions may speak for man—the church speaks for God. Other institutions exist for a century or so and then pass away; but the church of Jesus Christ is eternal. “The gates of hell shall not prevail against it.”

There is another reason. The church is the greatest institution on the face of the earth. Bruce Barton says, “Every local church is a branch-office of the greatest business in the world. That business—which is the church—has more paid employes than any great corporation in the world; it has headquarters in every country; its total budget amounts to hundreds of millions of dollars. It supports hospitals in every great city; it supports hundreds of colleges; it cares for thousands of babies in its Orphan Homes; it is curing sick people in India and China with its doctors; it is teaching boys and girls in Turkey and Hindustan * * * To run a business that size is a job for men, big red-blooded men—” and the church has a right to invite these men with

their possessions and knowledge to help run its business.

Conclusion

We have no record of what happened to these men who refused the invitation to cast their lot with God's people. We do have a record of the lives and achievements of the men who did accept the invitation. Moses, David, and the long line of Hebrew prophets—these names shall never die. And Peter, James, John, Matthew, and Paul—their names are the great names of the earth.

The young man might have become a disciple and left his story of the Christ in a written gospel. He might have preached like Peter or Paul and left the stamp of his character upon the world for all time—but he refused the invitation and went back to his possessions. Hobab might have gone with Moses and God's people to the verge of the promised land. He might have been one of those immortal few who crossed over and took possession of the land. But he refused the invitation and went away to his own people. Thus the curtain falls upon the lives with great opportunities, leaving them in the outer darkness. Where will it leave you?

OURSELVES AND OUR SHADOWS

* * * *they even carried out the sick into the streets, and laid them on beds and couches, that, as Peter came by, at the least his shadow might overshadow some one of them.—Acts 5:15.*

THE history of the world is the lengthened shadows of great men. Witness such names as Abraham, Moses, Samuel, David, Isaiah, John the Baptist, Peter, John, Paul, Augustine, Calvin, John Knox, Bunyan, Wesley, Alexander Campbell, Henry Ward Beecher, to take only a few names from the roster of religious worthies. We walk in their shadows to-day. Augustine controlled the thinking of the church for a thousand years; and then his teaching was revamped by Calvin, who cast his shadow over Protestantism for four hundred years. Influence through personality, direct and indirect, is the most potent factor in life.

Ourselves—Direct Influence

Every one exerts conscious influence in some direction. This influence will be in proportion to what the individual is in his essential personality—his capacity, his talents, his purpose, and the strength of his will.

It was undoubtedly the purpose of Jesus to consciously influence the world to believe on Him as the one able to save unto the uttermost. To this end He sent forth the apostles to teach all nations. Every believer became a conscious herald of the Good News. They that were scattered abroad went everywhere preaching the Word. Their success

was largely due to the serious purpose of their hearts and the Holy Spirit which had been sent down from heaven.

Too many church members conceive of their religious duty as being *to do nothing at all*. The second bishop of Alabama often told the following story, which illustrates the idea that many have of joining the church. He had taken an old Negro into the Episcopal Church, who had quit its fellowship soon after. When the Bishop met Josiah, after a few weeks, he asked: "Josiah, why did you leave my church? Anybody hurt your feelings there, or anything like that?"

"La, no, Marse Hooker. La, No! De 'Piscopals dey is gem'men if dey ain't nottin' else. Dar ain't nobody hut my feelins. No, sah. I lef dat chu'ch 'caze I couldn't read in de book. Dey all reads and ansahs backs so cheerful luk, and des kase I can't read and can't come in right, an' de folks looks roun' when I ansahs wrong an' hearty, I boun' to leave dat chu'ch."

"And why did you leave the Methodist church so suddenly?"

"Well, you see, Marse Hooker, dem Mefodis folks dey is al'a's holdin a 'Quiry Meetin.' Now you know yousi'f, Marse Hooker, cullud men can't stan' too much 'quirin' into. I 'bleeged to quit dat chu'ch."

"Do you think, Josiah, you can stick to the Baptist Church?"

"La, yas, massa! 'Kaze wid de Baptists hit's jes' dip an' done wid it!"

Christianity cannot be made to prevail if church members generally take the view of the old darkey. There is too much joining and nothing more. Joining the church means enlisting for a war. Every

member must be a soldier for Christ. He must learn how to wield the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. He must exercise himself in a conscious way for God.

Our Shadows—Indirect Influence

What we say and do when we are not conscious that we are starting waves of influence that will tell for or against Jesus Christ often produces momentous results.

The silent shadow of the everyday life helps to make friends or enemies for Christ,—helps to stabilize or demoralize the communities in which we live. Says the *Seattle Churchman*: "A little clock in a jeweler's window in a certain Western town stopped one day for half an hour, at fifteen minutes of nine. School-children, noticing the time, stopped to play; people hurrying to the train, looking at the clock, began to walk leisurely; professional men, after a look at the clock, stopped to chat a minute with one another; working men and women noted the time and lingered a little longer in the sunshine, and all were half an hour late because one small clock stopped. Never had these people known how much they had depended upon that clock till it had led them astray." So the community is unconsciously depending upon the influence of Christians. One may think that he has no influence, but he cannot go wrong without leading others astray.

Then there is the great matter of influence after death. Sam Jones died in October, 1906. Liquor men, in one of the counties of Georgia, thinking they could win with the intrepid leader of the prohibition forces gone, called an election under the local option laws of the State. The prohibitionists were frightened.

How could they win with their leader gone? But they determined to fight. They lifted up a banner inscribed "For Sam Jones and Prohibition." They mounted his name on the ballots. Liquor registered eighty-five votes, and prohibition 1,686. This county set on fire other counties, and soon the whole of Georgia was in the prohibition ranks. Sam Jones' shadow was over the land for good.

It was freely predicted that the movement inaugurated by the Campbells would cease to move when the great leader died at Bethany in 1866. But in every way its greatest gains have been made since his death. His shadow became an ever enlarging and ennobling influence.

The Measure of Influence

It is impossible to measure the extent of influence. It reaches beyond the confines of time into eternity. Richard Gibbs wrote a tract entitled "The Bruised Reed." A tin peddler gave it to a boy named Richard Baxter, and through reading it he was brought to Christ. Baxter wrote "A Call to the Unconverted." Among the thousands converted by it was Philip Dodridge, who in turn wrote "The Rise and Progress of Religion in the Soul." This book fell into the hands of William Wilberforce, who became the great emancipator of slaves in the British colonies, and won him to Christ. Wilberforce wrote "A Practical View of Christianity," which fired the heart of Leigh Richmond, who wrote the "Dairyman's Daughter," of which four million copies up to 1849 had been circulated. It has been translated into fifty languages. What a mighty and immeasurable chain of influence Richard Gibbs started with his "Bruised Reed."

“A mother sang to her child one day
A song of that beautiful home above;
Sang it as only a woman sings
Whose heart is full of a mother’s love.

“And many a time in the years that came
He heard the sound of that low sweet song;
It took him back to his childhood days,
It kept his feet from the paths of wrong.

* * *

“A mother spoke to her child one day
In an angry voice that made him start,
As though an arrow had sped that way
And pierced his loving and tender heart;

“And when he had grown to man’s estate,
And was tempted and tried, as all men are,
He fell; for his mother’s angry words
Had left on his heart a lasting scar.”

WORLDLINESS

I pray not that thou shouldest take them from the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil one.—John 17:15.

THE disciples were not to be abstracted from the world, but to be so reinforced with heavenly wisdom and power as to be kept from the evil. The world was the proper theater for their activities. They were to be in it, while it was to be out of them. The ship is natural and powerful in the water; but helpless and ruined if the water is in it.

Worldliness Defined

A thing is not necessarily worldly because it has been labeled as such. Labels have their place, no doubt, but we like to determine the quality of a thing for ourselves. In some churches instrumental music is classed as worldly; but the majority of Christian people think of the church organ as an aid to worship.

Faber described the world as being "not altogether matter, nor yet altogether spirit. It is not man only, not Satan only, nor is it exactly sin. It is an infection, an inspiration, an atmosphere, a life, a coloring matter, a pageantry, a fashion, a taste, a witchery. None of all these names suit it, and all of them suit it."

Jowett describes it after this fashion: "It is a spirit, a temperament, an attitude of soul. It is life without high callings, life devoid of lofty ideals. It is a gaze always horizontal, never vertical. Its motto is 'forward,' never 'upward.' Its goal is success, not holiness. Hearing no mystic voices, it is

destitute of reverence. It never bows in rapt and silent wonder in the secret place. It experiences no awe-inspiring perceptions of a mysterious presence. Its life is bounded by superficialities. It stops at the veil, the thin, gauzy covering of the Eternal. It has lusts, but no supplications. It has ambition, but no aspiration. God is not denied; He is forgotten and ignored."

The World We Are to Avoid

The Apostle John has described this world: "Do not love the world, nor the things in the world * * * For the things in the world—the cravings of the earthly nature, the cravings of the eyes, the show and pride of life—they all come, not from the Father, but from the world. And the world, with its cravings, is passing away, but he who does God's will continues forever" (I John 2:15-17).

The world that swims in space, with its cloud-capped mountains, its gorgeous sunsets, its rolling plains, its laughing brooks and mighty rivers, its great oceans that lave all shores, is not the world that we are to avoid loving; but "the cravings of the earthly nature, * * * of the eyes, the show and pride of life."

Why We Are to Avoid It

The spirit of worldliness shuts out the higher view of life. One of Bunyan's characters is so busily engaged with his muckrake that he never looks up to see the angel who is offering him a golden crown. The stars may garnish in vain the canopy of heaven, if we never lift our eyes to behold their beauty. The riches of grace in Christ Jesus are all in vain,

if we do not reach out the hand of the heart to grasp them and make them our own.

But we should chiefly avoid these things because they pass away. What is really more transient than "the show and pride of life?" We once stood upon the bank of a mighty river when its flood was overflowing its banks. It was a sort of wonderful pageantry; but in a few days it was gone. The rocks and hills, however, remained unshaken and unmoved. So with this world. It passes away, "but he who does God's will continues forever."

The Blessed Possession of Unworldliness

The best defence against all contagion is exuberant health. To be filled with the Spirit, is to leave no place or desire for the corrupting things of the world. Christ said, "the prince of this world cometh: and hath nothing in me" (John 14:30). There was no affinity between him and Christ, nothing in Christ that corresponded to what was in him, and hence it was not difficult for Christ to reject him. So with us. As long as the spirit of the world is in us it will be difficult, yea impossible, for us to resist it. If we enjoy a picture show that is corrupting in its influence, it is because some of that corruption is in us. We see a part of ourselves on the screen. The man out of whom seven demons were cast, was taken possession of again, because he remained empty. The empty soul is a temptation to evil influences. But to have our affections set on things above where Christ is; to be full of the spirit of unworldliness, is to be proof against all the fiery assaults of this world.

STIRRING THE EAGLE'S NEST

*As an eagle that stirreth up her nest,
That fluttereth over her young,
He spread abroad his wings, he took them,
He bare them on his pinions.—Deuteronomy 32:11.*

THIS passage, found in the Song of Moses, celebrates the greatness and goodness of Jehovah in dealing with his people. Leaving the court of the Pharaohs, Moses spent forty years in the land of Midian as a shepherd. This kind of life made him a student of the book of nature. As the first astronomers were doubtless shepherds, so were the first naturalists. In traversing the regions about Horeb with his flocks and herds, Moses had observed the eagle nesting among the crags, her care of her young, how she brooded and fed them; how, when the time came to try their wings, she stirred up their downy nest and made it a bed of thorns to prick and irritate their tender flesh until their only escape from torment was in effort at flight. The man of God had seen the eagle circling toward the sun followed by the wavering, uncertain flight of the eaglet; and often, too, he had seen the eaglet preserved from destruction by the sudden swoop of the mother bird to prevent its fall and to bear it upon her wings.

When Moses, in after years, became the leader and emancipator of a great people, he said, "God deals with us as the eagle with her young. He broods over us through his spirit; He stirs us up when we become calloused by sin; and our faltering efforts to rise to higher heights of holiness he sustains, He bears us upon His wings."

Discontent and Progress

“Godliness with contentment is great gain,” said the apostle. If godliness is the foundation of our contentment, it is right that we should be content. But we must also bear in mind that godliness is progressive. We are exhorted to “grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.” The same apostle who urged contentment also said “I press toward the mark.”

God has various ways of making us dissatisfied with our present condition. The Israelites, too well satisfied with the flesh pots of Egypt, have their bondage increased until they groan under their burdens and prayers to God for deliverance are wrung from their hearts. The iron heel of tyranny is upon their necks. They long for freedom. Their last resort was God, and turning to Him they found the coveted deliverance.

God uses the Holy Spirit to stir up discontent in our hearts. “And he, when he is come, will convict the world in respect of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment” (John 16:8). God’s Holy Spirit works through human personalities—through the preachers of His word. It requires courage to let the Holy Spirit have His way with us. It is not exactly pleasant to so preach as to stir up the spirit of discontent. It is far easier to go on in the smooth way, draw your salary, be at ease in Zion, let every one alone. But God says: “Son of man, I have made thee a watchman unto the house of Israel: Therefore hear the word of My mouth, and give them warning from Me. When I say unto the wicked, Thou shalt surely die; and thou givest him no warning, nor speakest to warn the wicked from his

wicked way, to save his life; the wicked man shall die in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at Thy hand" (Ezekiel 3:17, 18).

Holding Up the Mirror of God's Word

Most people are unaware of the deformities of sin. A man looking into a mirror saw blood on his face. He had not been conscious of its presence until the unvarnished mirror revealed it. As we look into the mirror of God's word many defects will be seen. David was not conscious of the enormity of his sin until Nathan held up the mirror of truth and he saw the hideous reflection of his crime. Felix trembled as he saw himself in the inspired words of Paul. Lying, dishonesty, intemperance, impurity are such hideous deformities of character that the realization of them being a part of us humiliates, disconcerts, and shames us into the dust.

The Revelation of Unconscious Powers

Conviction on account of sin is not enough. The consciousness of sin, that cannot be relieved by hope or faith, works death. Before the sinner can escape from his misery, from his misspent, misshapen life, he must believe in God and in His Christ. This faith brings vision, a revelation of innate powers, and a conscious quickening of abilities that were before unrealized, just as the eaglet's efforts at flight reveal its power to fly. All that the sinner needs to do in order to call out the vast potentialities of his own soul is to trust God and take the forward step. This taps the reservoir of his unconscious powers and vents them into his conscious life.

All ministers know what salvation has come to

weak, discouraged, struggling churches by daring to undertake the seemingly impossible. Hidden resources came to light as advance was made. When Dr. Kirk's church in Boston refused to admit to membership the eighteen-year-old Moody because his examination was so unsatisfactory, Moody did not suspect that he had hidden powers whose development would make him one of the greatest of modern evangelists. The divine energy is latent in all souls; all churches; and it only awaits some propitious stirring for its release.

God's Protection Assured

God's Spirit broods over His people. It develops and guides their energies aright. It saves them from Charybdis on the one hand and Scylla on the other. As the mother eagle saves the eaglet from being dashed upon the rocks before its wings are strong enough to support flight, so God delivers us from temptation, from destruction, and makes all things work together for good to them that love Him, who are called according to His purpose. Or, to change the figure, God holds the rudder while we labor at the oar. We are workers together with God. We trust all to his guidance and launch out into the deep.

Trying Our Wings

John McNeill, a well-known Scotch evangelist, tells us of a friend of his who owned an eagle which he had captured when young. He raised it as near as he could as a domestic fowl. At length he was compelled to sell his possessions and go to the other side of the world. What should he do with his eagle now? He did not like to give it away nor

sell it to a stranger. So he decided to give it its freedom. He would give it back to itself. He would sell it free.

"He opened the enclosure where it had been kept," says the narrator, "and brought the bird out to the back green. It walked about; this seemed like a rather larger place than its daily run—that was all. The man was disappointed. He took the big bird in his arms, lifted it, and placed it upon the garden wall. The eagle turned and looked down upon him. Just then the sun that had been behind the clouds, shone out warm and bright, and poured its beams down upon the captive bird. It lifted its eyes to the sun, and pulled itself to its utmost height. What thoughts were stirring in its breast then? Does a captive eagle recollect the cliffs and rocky crags, and feel again the tempest's breath, and see the lightning's zigzag path over the storm and along the sea? It unfolded one mighty wing—then stretched out the other—then gave a shrill scream to the sun and its native crags, and was soon but a vanishing point in the deep, blue sky."

It is time for young people, older people, to try their wings. As no eagle was made to live in a henhouse, so no soul was made to be satisfied with the things of this world.

"Rise, my soul, and stretch thy wings,
Thy better portion trace;
Rise from transitory things
Towards heaven, thy native place."

It took persecution to scatter the early disciples from Jerusalem, that they might go everywhere preaching. When the church gets too comfortable, some

afflictive dispensation is often necessary to call her to a sense of duty. God stirs her up. And the sinner seeks comfort in his sins, but finds none. The way of the transgressor is hard. Sin may, indeed, so benumb and deaden the conscience for a season as to make the life unafraid and comparatively calm; but it is the calm before the storm, the fancied security when destruction is imminent. The awakening, the torment, that is sure to come to all not included in the covenanted mercies of God will be like the prickings and tearings of a thousand thorns; but all—*all*—to the end that salvation may come.

THE WEAKNESS OF STRENGTH

* * * *But he knew that Jehovah was departed from him.—Judges 16:20.*

IN no character do we have a better illustration of the weakness of strength than in Samson. Most people are familiar with the main events in his career. He is one of the few men who stand out in that rough period of Hebrew history which is recorded in the book of Judges. Measured by our present standards of morality there is not much in Samson's life to commend him to decent people; but measured by the standards of his own day he was no doubt better than many of his associates.

We are interested just now in Samson as he comes to the end of his career. He was the strongest man of his day. This strength was given to him by Jehovah. Yet he seems to have used it to further his own selfish ends until the time came when Jehovah departed from him. And with Jehovah went his remarkable strength.

The Test of Strength

Samson had played into the hands of a woman who was seeking to deliver him to his enemies. He deliberately lies to this woman to make a show of his strength. Three times he tells her the supposed secret of his strength, only to mock her by breaking himself loose. Then, in a moment of weakness, he reveals the real secret. When the locks are shorn from his head Jehovah departs from him, and he awakens to the fact that his strength is gone. "And the Philistines laid hold on him, and put out his eyes; and they brought him down to Gaza, and

bound him with fetters of brass; and he did grind in the prison-house." This, in brief, is the career of a man who boasted of his great strength, and who thought he could save himself in that strength.

It is a picture of thousands who have lived since Samson's day. When the body is strong, and the mind keen, and the will active, men can do many questionable things for a time and then throw them off. It is possible for a strong man to play with certain sins for a while and get by with it. Some have played with the drinking game and yet controlled it. Some have gambled without being totally lost. But sooner or later when men have persisted in playing with sin, they reach the place where their strength is insufficient to break the hold of the enemy. In a day when they least expect it, the awakening comes, and their strength is gone. The world is filled with these shorn Samsons, whose eyes have been put out to all that is high and noble and pure in life, and who are grinding in the prison-house of sin. It is true that Samson's strength returned. But it was for no good purpose. It only meant his utter destruction.

The Processes of Sin

In this story we have outlined three of the most deadly processes of sin in its workings in human life. Sin always works gradually; does not attempt to gain all its objectives at once. It produces a deadening effect upon a man's conscience, making him utterly unconscious of the undermining forces which are at work. It so deceives a man that he supposes all the strength which he has is his own, and that God has had nothing to do with either its origin or end.

Samson did not lose his strength all at once. Early in his career he was led astray through the fascination of the strange woman. Early in his life he antagonized his enemies with the exhibit of his great strength. Gradually he played into the hands of these enemies, who at first were so easily defeated, and after a long process of recklessness and sin, his strength became weakness. Sin was silently sapping its way into his vitals and getting the stage all set for the final explosion. And when the end came Samson did not know that the Lord had departed from him. In the beginning of his career he realized that his peculiar strength came from Jehovah. But in his later life he was deceived into believing that his strength was his own, and Jehovah was left out. It is sin's way of trying to eliminate God from human life.

These processes of sin which destroyed Samson are working in every life. The power of sin in a soul grows gradually, and generally unconsciously. In the thrilling story of his experiences with our soldiers in France, Sherwood Eddy tells of how the British troops took Messines Ridge. It was a low hill, only about three hundred feet in height, but it commanded the countryside for miles, and was heavily fortified by the enemy. Before the attack the ridge was undermined with about 500 tons of high explosive. On the morning of the engagement, at 2:50, the ground suddenly opened from beneath, as nineteen great mines were exploded one after another, and fountains of fire and earth like huge volcanoes leaped into the air. Hill 60, which had dealt such deadly damage to the British, was rent asunder and collapsed. The works of the enemy and

untold numbers of their men were blown to pieces, and the way paved for a great victory.

Why is it that so many fall when the hosts of hell storm the human soul? It is because the whole structure of character has been undermined by the processes of sin. Slowly and silently its mines have been laid all ready for the explosion on the day of the final attack. It was so with Samson, who was endowed with what appeared to be superhuman strength. It will be so with any man who persists in playing with sin and using his strength only for himself.

Conclusion

It is impossible for any man to save himself in his own strength. Some years ago the editor of a great magazine asked Peter Clark Macfarlane to write a series of articles about men who were down and out and who had come back. These men were found. The stories of their lives appeared in the magazine and later in book form under the title of "Those Who Have Come Back." And without exception the testimony of these men was to the effect that they came back, not through their own strength, but through the help of some outside influence operating in their lives. This influence was discovered to be religion. The editor of the magazine was disappointed and sent Macfarlane out to find another group of men who had come back without the influence of religion. Just recently Macfarlane told one of his friends that he had been searching all over the earth and as yet had not found a single subject for this second series of articles. There is only one way of salvation, and that is through Jesus Christ.

It is said that on New Year's Eve in 1912, the

grandson of John Wanamaker went into Marioures' fashionable restaurant in New York and called for a bucket of champagne. The fickle, folly-bent crowd looked on to applaud the young fool. The waiter filled his order. Then he washed his hands in it, saying, "So I wash away all my sins for 1911." A bucket full of champagne will not wash away the sins of 1911 or any other year, for sin is not a defilement of the hands. It is a disease of the heart, and only Jesus Christ can wash it out.

WHEN GOD IS NEAR

Seek ye Jehovah while he may be found; call ye upon him while he is near.—Isaiah 55:6.

THE author of the closing chapters of Isaiah was torn with conflicting emotions. With an unsparing hand he lays bare the sins of his people. (Isa. 59:3-8.) No preacher ever spoke plainer words about sin than these. But his preaching did not end with condemnation. Standing before his congregation with a yearning and overflowing heart he gives one of the most gracious pictures of God's mercy for sinners that has ever been put into human language. A more earnest plea and invitation to the sinning soul to accept the love and mercy of a forgiving God than the 55th chapter of Isaiah, has never been made. It is out of this wonderful chapter of pleading and invitation that our text comes.

The prophets came nearer to universalizing God than any of the ancient religious teachers, and yet they never quite got away from a God of certain locations. The words, "while He may be found" hold a suggestion that God is in certain places at certain times. In the New Testament we get away from the God of definite places. In his conversation with the Samaritan woman Jesus gives His great utterance on this subject. "The hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and truth: for such doth the Father seek to be his worshippers. God is a spirit, and they that worship him must worship in spirit and truth" (John 4:23, 24). Paul in his sermon to the men of Athens, places in sharp contrast to their localized gods his conception of a universalized God. "The

God that made the world and all things therein
* * * dwelleth not in temples made with hands *
* * He is not far from each one of us: for in him
we live, and move, and have our being" (Acts 17:
24-28).

The fact that God is always near to all men does not, however, obscure the truth of what the prophet is saying. For aside from the conceptions of his day he is stating both a principle and a fact—the principle that God is always willing to give His wayward children another chance, and the fact that there are certain experiences in every human life, certain seasons of the soul, "when God breaks through" and is very near.

"When God Breaks Through"

God is often very near to us in our hours of worship. When the noises and interests of the world are shut out He finds His great opportunity. Sometimes He comes close to us in the reading of great literature, the story of the struggles of a soul in a novel, or in the strivings of the soul as portrayed by the Christian poets. God often becomes more real when we are shocked or stunned by some great disaster. In those hours we feel the utter helplessness of man before the forces of nature. But God most often "breaks through" in the intimate, personal experiences and losses of life. When we have sinned and failed, when the hour of remorse and penitence comes, then God comes. And in the hour when death robs us of our dearest ones, God comes very near.

In these hours when God is near, thousands of men and women have made decisions that have changed their whole career. It is in these hours

that the first foundation stones of noble character are laid. It is in these hours that conquering faith is born. And it is in these hours that the powers of hell which hold a human soul are vanquished and driven from the field.

"While He May Be Found"

Our text is both an invitation and a warning. The prophet suggests that a time may come when God cannot be found. The idea is not that God might hide Himself from man. "Behold Jehovah's hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither His ear heavy that it cannot hear; but your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid His face from you" * * * (Isa. 59:1, 2). The warning is against that condition of the soul which may stand as a barrier between it and God. Our God will never hide His face from those who seek Him in all sincerity and earnestness. But it is one of the inevitable laws of our own souls that we may hang a veil between our vision and the face of God that will make Him invisible. If we do not find God it is not the fault of His nature, but of ourselves.

In a word of warning to the Ephesians, Paul speaks of the tragedy of a hardened heart. (Eph. 4:17-19.) The author of Hebrews warns his readers against the same sin. "To-day if ye shall hear his voice, harden not your hearts." He gives this warning emphasis by relating the tragic facts of Israel's history.

You would be startled if your physician should tell you that your arteries were beginning to harden, and that in a few years your life might be snuffed out without a moment's warning. Yet you pay very

little attention to the warnings of the Bible and your preacher concerning the hardening of the arteries of your soul.

The story is told of a beautiful Christian girl from one of the Southern states who married a rich New York merchant. She had been an earnest worker in her church. She was loved in her community for her character and good work. But the fever heat at which she lived in her new home sapped the vitality of her soul. She turned her back upon the church. Some years later while returning from California she was injured in a wreck. As the physician looked into her beautiful face she said, "You must get me back to New York by tomorrow night. I have a social engagement which I cannot break." "Madame," said the physician, "you have but one hour to live." Then, briefly scanning her life she exclaimed: "God made His will plain to me, but I went the other way. Oh, my God! Only one hour!"

Conclusion

To the multitudes who came to hear John the Baptist preach he said, "There standeth one in your midst whom ye know not." It is true to-day. God is always near in Jesus Christ, and to save. Oh, men and women, weary with the problems of life! Oh, seekers after power, or wealth or pleasure! Oh, lonely soul, struggling perhaps with some mighty temptation, or to free yourself from the bonds of some destroying habit—"There standeth a Saviour in your midst whom you know not."

A Christian governor was besieged with appeals for the pardon of a convict who was condemned to die. He could not see his way clear to pardon the

man, but on the day before his death he went to the prison and read the Bible and prayed with him. He went unannounced and the convict did not recognize him. When he had gone another prisoner said, "Do you know who that man was?" The convict replied that he did not. "Well," said his friend, "that was the governor." Then in his deep despair the convict cried out, "Oh, had I only known it, I would have laid hold of him and refused to let him go until he had pardoned me." But he did not recognize the hour of his opportunity.

Some day will you cry out in despair and anguish because you failed to know the hour when "God broke through" to bless and flood your famished soul with new power? "Seek ye the Lord while he may be found; call ye upon him while he is near."

THE HOLY SPIRIT AS OUR HELPER

And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may be with you for ever.
—John 14:16.

IN all ages the Lord has helped His people. This help was adapted to their capacity, understanding, and the circumstances controlling their lives. In more primitive times various rites and ceremonies were imposed as the best method of helping the infant race. But this was without, while the new, spiritual way is within. In the old dispensation, the Spirit manifested Himself in a wonder-working way; in the new, he is the abiding guest of the heart. In the old, fear was inspired; in the new, love and life. Jesus was *with* the disciples while the old dispensation yet remained; but his bodily presence was withdrawn, that he might be *in* them through the Spirit, which was far better.

The World Cannot Receive the Holy Spirit

Speaking of the Holy Spirit Jesus plainly says that “the world cannot receive” (John 14:17) Him. It is the function of the Spirit to “convict the world in respect of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment” (John 16:8-11). This may be done in various ways. The worldly man may read the Bible and be convicted of sin; or he may be silently influenced by the steady, Christ-like example of some Christian man or woman; or some event, some action, may turn his heart from sin; or, as is generally the case, the word of God may come to him through some consecrated personality, some preacher of the word it may be, and he turns from sin unto God.

Thus it may be said that the influence is first external that there may be created in the mind room for the Holy Spirit. It must be remembered also that the Holy Spirit is behind and in the word, the event, the action, the influence, or whatever it is that convicts and turns the sinner to God. But the heart must be cleansed of sin before there can be a home for the permanent indwelling of the Holy Spirit. "The unspiritual man rejects the things of the Spirit of God" (1 Cor. 2:14).

The Holy Spirit and the Christian

His presence in the heart is essential to our standing and the reality of our Christian experience. "But ye are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you. But if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his" (Romans 8:9). It is also declared that "no man can say, Jesus is Lord, but in the Holy Spirit" (1 Cor. 12:3). It matters not what ceremonies or rites we may have observed, what creeds professed, what ecclesiastical organization holds our names, if we do not have the Spirit of Christ we are none of His. Some consideration of this solemn fact would give pause to many an acrimonious debate and lessen the loud contention for a "restoration of New Testament Christianity," when nothing more is apparently meant than the form of baptism. We have heard many addresses "contending for the faith once delivered to the saints"; but we have yet to hear one whose chief emphasis was laid upon the restoration of the Spirit of Christ.

The indwelling Spirit creates new conditions, a new environment, new circumstances of life. "But

ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit." "For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are the sons of God" (Romans 8:14). A spiritual atmosphere, spiritual views and attitudes, a spiritual purpose, impulses and affections, and above all a passion for righteousness, make up the conditions of the new man's life in Christ Jesus.

That expressive phrase, "the communion of the Holy Spirit," carries with it the mystical, but true idea, of the great unseen Companion Who walks with us in the crowded ways of life, Who becomes as intimate as thought itself in moments of meditation and reflection, and Who lays hold of our hearts with an inspiration and power that the world can neither give nor take away. Thus we have the Holy Spirit as our friend and companion as we tread the pleasant or thorny ways of life,—always anear to increase our joy, to quiet our turbulent hearts, and to comfort us in moments of despair. He also becomes our dependable guide, Who leads us into all truth. He takes the things of Christ and makes them plain to us. He intercedes in our behalf; He renews us; He bears witness to our adoption as sons of God; He anoints and sanctifies us; and He creates in us that spiritual sap which is transmuted into the fruit of "love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, meekness, self-control" (Gal. 5:22).

We heard Dr. Shannon in a recent address tell of what a friend said as they were walking through the cornfield. His friend asked him what he knew about corn. He mentioned one or two obvious things. Then his friend told him how the stalk would fail to produce any grains at all, but for the pollen falling upon the silk, thus fertilizing the ear and caus-

ing the substance in the stalk to be transmuted into the ripened corn of autumn. Dr. Shannon said he exclaimed, "The Holy Spirit of the corn." In some such sense it is necessary for the Holy Spirit, sent down from heaven, to make us partakers of the divine nature and to pass something of our physical and mental natures into the ripened fruitage of a Christian personality.

The Measure of the Spirit

God placed no limitations upon the Spirit's power in us and over us. Christ said of himself: "For he whom God hath sent speaketh the words of God: for he giveth not the Spirit by measure" (John 3:34). Again, speaking of them that should believe on him, he said: "He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, from within him shall flow rivers of living water" (John 7:38). Rivers, mark you! The Mississippi, the Nile, and the Amazon rolled into one, making an immeasurable stream for the cleansing and healing of the nations.

It is pertinent to ask, shall we permit our lives to remain channels for the polluted, death-lurking waters of sin, or open them to the gladdening, purifying waters of the river of life?

LET BROTHERLY LOVE CONTINUE

Let your brotherly love continue.—Heb. 13:1.

IT is possible for us all to agree on at least one thing that should continue, namely “brotherly love.” Without it, the observances of religion are a solemn mockery. Without it, there is no tie to bind, no heart to feel, no hands to help, and no bliss of heaven. The continuance of love is the true Apostolic Succession, and those who do not have it are not in line, have never been, and indeed cannot be ordained of God. There is no church but needs it in greater fervency; and many are failing to do the Lord’s work because of jealousies and secret grudges, and often of downright hate and malice in their hearts toward their brethren in the same church, all too often in the same congregation. But right here is the vital test of religion. “We know that we have passed out of death into life, because we love the brethren” (1 John 2:14). “By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another” (John 13:35).

The Cause and Inspiration of Brotherly Love

“We love him because he first loved us” (1 John 4:19). Love begets love. We also love one another because we have been made partakers of the divine nature, and “because the love of God hath been shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit which was given unto us” (Romans 5:5). It is not possible to have the nature of God in us and not love one another. “God is love.” As we inherit the nature of our parents and are attached to our family, so, being born again not of corruptible seed but

of the will of God, we inherit His nature, are attached to Him and the family of the faithful. This love of the brethren is sometimes complained of as being a hard duty, because there are so many that are not lovable—neither in their person nor in their disposition. It is not according to human nature, we are told, to love them. That may be. But there is a vast gulf between human nature and divine nature. According to the divine nature it is neither hard nor unlovely to bestow our affection upon the brethren. All who are partakers of the divine nature are lovely, certainly in their souls, for God makes them so. Soul-beauty, after all, is the only real and abiding beauty. But this love of one another in “the blameless family of God,” and that same love reaching out to those who know not God, is the mystery of the divine experience in our souls. The unconverted cannot understand this, for the converted man is a mystery—not “The wind that bloweth where it listeth,” but “every one that is born of the spirit.”

“ Were the whole realm of nature mine,
That were a present far too small;
Love so amazing, so divine,
Demands my life, my soul, my all.”

The Duty of Loving One Another

Human love can be created and controlled by the will—certainly to a remarkably large extent; and divine love is, to some extent, under our own control. As members of the same family we recognize the duty of loving one another. It ought not to be difficult to recognize this duty in the family of God, for we are His children, partakers of His nature, and

guided by His spirit. Furthermore, if it were not a duty that we could perform, Christ would never have said, "A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another" (John 13:34). And if its degree could not be increased, Peter would never have given the exhortation to "have fervent love among yourselves" (1 Pet. 4:8). Again, unless we love one another we belie our profession as Christians. "If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, cannot love God whom he hath not seen" (1 John 4:20).

Last of all, if we fail in this duty of loving one another, we are guilty of the greatest sin, for we have violated the greatest commandment. Hear the words of our Lord: "And one of them, a lawyer, asked him a question, trying him: Teacher, which is the great commandment in the law? And he said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the great and first commandment. And the second like unto it is this, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. On these two commandments the whole law hangeth, and the prophets" (Matt. 22:35-40). Here we have revealed the greatest test to which a Christian can be subjected. To disobey the commandment of love—the greatest commandment—is to be guilty of the greatest disobedience, and to approach the sin against the Holy Spirit, which hath no forgiveness in this world nor the next.

Restoration of New Testament Christianity

Those who would restore the New Testament church, must ever consider their work far from

complete until they have restored the spirit of love. It is of the very essence of the Christianity that Christ established. Without it Christianity has no existence; and yet many have made a virtue of faithfulness in observing outward forms, while hardly a word is said about the "new commandment * * * that ye love one another." It is so much easier to observe the forms of religion than to be filled with its love; to think of some fancied slight or injustice to our poor little selves, and to let it rankle and build up a wall of hate that separates, than it is to love and do good unto them that seem to despitefully use us. To restore primitive Christianity is beyond a peradventure a much deeper thing than restoring its external ordinances and supposed polity. Unless its spirit has been restored there has been no restoration, and this cannot be done without faith, prayer, consecration, and the utmost discipline of the human will bringing it into subjection to the love of God and conferring subjective freedom.

The Measure of Brotherly Love

Christ gives us at once the standard of measurement—"as I have loved you" (John 15:12). "Hereby know we love, because he laid down his life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren" (1 John 3:16). The apostle Peter exhorts,—“above all things being fervent in your love among yourselves; for love covereth a multitude of sins” (1 Pet. 4:8). To live a life of sacrificial love in each other’s behalf; to have a love that so completely fills our hearts that we can see nothing in others but what is in ourselves; to believe in the redemptive, cleansing power of love among brethren—the love that is above suspicion, that believeth

all things, that hopeth all things, that endureth all things, is to have something of the measure of the divine love in our hearts.

Is it worth while that we jostle a brother
Bearing his load on the rough road of life?
Is it worth while that we jeer at each other
In blackness of heart—that we war to the knife?
God pity us all in our pitiful strife!

God pity us all as we jostle each other!
God pardon us all for the triumph we feel
When a fellow goes down 'neath his load on the
heather,
Pierced to the heart. Words are keener than steel
And mightier far for woe or for weal.

Look at the roses saluting each other!
Look at the herds all at peace on the plain!
Man, and man only, makes war on his brother
And laughs in his heart at his peril or pain,
Shamed by the beasts that go down on the plain.

Were it not well in this brief little journey
On over the isthmus, down into the tide,
We give him a fish instead of a serpent,
Ere folding the hands to be and abide
Forever and aye in dust at his side?

Is it worth while that we battle to humble
Some poor fellow soldier down into the dust?
God pity us all! Time eftsoon will tumble
All of us together, like leaves in a gust,
Humbled indeed down into the dust.

—*Joaquin Miller.*

A MAN'S LIFE

* * * *Take heed and keep yourselves from all covetousness; for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth.—Luke 12:15.*

JESUS was supremely interested in life. For him the chief consideration in the universe was "a man's life." There is no profit in any system, even though it gain the whole world, which in any way stunts, harms, or destroys "a man's life." No evil has been more destructive of human life than that of covetousness. Jesus was constant in his warnings against it. His message is never against wealth or riches as such, but always against the sin of covetousness which they produce in human society. No evil has ever entrenched itself more deeply in the human order of things than this one.

A False Philosophy of Life

Thousands of people in our day actually believe that "life consists in the abundance of things which one possesses." There are two general causes for this false philosophy:

First, material things are absolutely essential to the maintaining of life. Most of the time of most people is consumed in getting enough material things to keep body and soul together. Making a living is no holiday task. So long as we are in the body much of our time must be spent in dealing with things.

Second, most people are laboring under a false impression of what life really is. They think of it as meat and bread and pleasure and clothes—simply

that which ministers to the needs of the body, and the sensations of our physical nature.

Because of these two facts we find our age engaged in a mad race to see who can get hold of the largest bulk of mere things. In our modern life people live too close together. When the cities were small, and people lived far apart they did not know what others had. Now every one knows just what his neighbor has. The poor know what the rich have. The spirit of parade has been growing in our country. People who have like to show off in public. These conditions breed covetousness.

A Vicious Circle

Because of this mad rush for material things we find ourselves living in a vicious circle. The extremely rich man is in the lead, and one after another down to the last man and woman we are circling round and round the god Mammon. Day after day we have been doing this until the speed has become terrific, and all around the circle we may see the poor, exhausted bodies of those who have dropped out. Still the mad race goes on. Each man after something more than he has or after something which the man in front has. And the motive power that keeps this circle going is "covetousness," the false philosophy that things are all-important in life.

Labor and capital are both in this circle. The following incident taken from the report of the Federal Commission on Industrial Relations concerning the strike in the city of Seattle throws some interesting light upon the mood of the extreme leadership on both sides of the industrial question:

"The representative of the employers was a typical

two-fisted, aggressive American business man of the west. He informed the Commission that all that body was accomplishing was the promotion of unrest and discontent, that there was only one thing to do with the organized workers and that was to subdue them. 'The fight has to go to a finish, and for myself,' he said, as he squared his vigorous physique, 'I am glad that I am living in a day when we can fight it to the end and lick those fellows to a frazzle.' The next witness happened to be an official of the I. W. W. and he said in brief, 'Why, gentlemen, you are simply wasting your valuable time; this thing has gone far beyond investigation; about all you can do is to hold a postmortem on the corpse and report the results. You know we fellows have this thing all settled; all that the capitalists have got left to do now is to find a soft place to fall.' "

Capital may succeed in crushing labor, and destroying its organizations; or labor may be able to overthrow capital, as it did in Russia, and take things into its own hands. But whatever happens in the industrial world, men and women will still be going round and round that vicious circle until somehow the evil of covetousness is gotten out of their hearts. It is the craze for the possession of things that is at the bottom of all our trouble, and until we strike at the source of that craze we have not begun to solve any problems.

What Profit is There?

Into the midst of this vicious circle Jesus Christ steps with his claim that a man's life does not consist in an abundance of these things we are all seeking. "What shall it profit a man if he gain the

whole world and lose his own life?" he asks. And this is the question his followers must ask this age.

The church is not to deal with the methods by which men seek to gain material things. Its word must be spoken in the realm where motives are born. Right motives do not often lend themselves to the furtherance of wrong methods. The church must challenge this whole philosophy of life. It must teach men that life is more than meat and drink and that in the last analysis mere things can never satisfy the human soul. It must face a thing-crazed world with the question, "Suppose you had all these things, what would you do with them?"

The universal experience of both men and nations is on the side of Jesus' philosophy. What did it profit Rome to become master of the world? What did it profit Napoleon to have Europe at his feet? What did it profit the Bourbons of France to allow conditions to breed the French Revolution? What did it profit Germany to dream of world-conquest? What did it profit Russia to keep the people in poverty and ignorance? Here is a rich man dying and leaving all his money, but with none to love him or mourn his going. What did it profit him? General Booth, dying penniless, but with all London weeping over his body was far richer than any of these.

Conclusion

Life is more than meat and drink to those who have accepted Jesus' way. Thousands who have no credit at the banks can say, "We have more than money." For real life is love, and faith, and hope, and peace of mind, and consciousness of duty well done and obligations to both man and God fulfilled.

In a little play called "The Will," James M. Bar-

rie has traced the course of "that strange sickness of the soul called greed." It is the story of a young lawyer and his wife starting life with high ideals and unselfish motives, only to be caught in that vicious circle of covetousness, and cast aside as miserable wrecks. It is the tragic story of the end of every selfish life.

We can do no better than listen to, and heed these words of the Master, "Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust consume, and where thieves break through and steal; but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth consume, and where thieves do not break through and steal; for where thy treasure is, there will thy heart be also."

THE STRUGGLE OF A GREAT SOUL

For that which I do I know not: for not what I would, that I do practice; but what I hate, that I do.
—Romans 7:15.

Wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me out of the body of this death?—Romans 7:24.

THE seventh chapter of Romans has been a great battle-field for theologians. Volumes, in fact whole libraries, have been written concerning its meaning. But putting all discussion aside we are coming to see that this great chapter only reveals the richness and fullness of its meaning to those who approach it as the revelation of the struggle of a great soul. When we read this chapter as the experience of the soul of its author, and not as his theological discussion of the doctrine of sin, we are in a different and a more wholesome atmosphere.

Dr. J. H. Jowett quotes some critic as saying, "The seventh chapter of Romans is the most terrible tragedy in all literature, ancient or modern, sacred or profane. Set beside the seventh chapter of Romans all your so-called great tragedies—your Macbeths, your Hamlets, your Lears, your Othellos—are all but so many stage plays; so much sound and fury signifying next to nothing when set alongside this awful tragedy of sin. The seventh chapter of Romans should always be printed in blood. Here are passions. Here are terror and pity. Here heaven and hell meet, as nowhere else in heaven or hell; and that for the last grapple together for the everlasting possession of that immortal soul, till you have a tragedy indeed, beside which there is no other tragedy."

And he adds, "The observations of this critic are true. That is just what this chapter is and does. It describes the supreme tragedy of the human soul; the supreme tragedy of life. It describes the daily array of contending combatants even upon the plane of the sanctified life. To these hostilities there is no truce; the apparent departure of the foe is only a feint for a subtler approach. The enemy is on the field when the night falls, and he is on the field in the morning."

The Tragedy of Life

This struggle of a soul in the warfare between the higher and lower natures, is the deepest tragedy of life. Paul was not the first man who gave expression to it. Xenophon says in trying to excuse his treasonable designs, "Certainly I must have two souls; for plainly it is not one and the same which is both good and evil; and at the same time wishes to do a thing and not to do it. Plainly then, there are two souls, and when the good one prevails, then it does good; and when the evil one predominates, then it does evil." This struggle has been a common theme of all great literature. Perhaps the classic illustration, and one that will never grow old so long as human nature remains as it now is, is the story of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde by Stevenson.

Edgar Allan Poe, whose own life was an example of this tragic struggle, gives a vivid picture of the soul caught in the meshes of an awful temptation, in his poem called "Ulalume." In the poem Poe's soul, his higher nature, is represented in Psyche. The other voice is that of his lower nature. The term "Ulalume" means the loss of the higher side of one's nature, the loss of the soul.

But the greatest illustration of this struggle is to be found in our own experience. Every man knows that there are two antagonistic forces within himself. In his darkest moments he realizes that "there are possible depths in his soul, deep beneath deep, hell beneath hell, into which it makes him shudder to gaze." And in his highest moments he is aware of the "possible heights, galleried glories, soaring, stretching to the very throne of God, which he may reach." "What a mixture is man! There is that within the soul that could soar on the wind in the skies above the clouds; and yet there are those brutal passions which would chain that soul as a galley-slave to the earth." Man asks, "What is that within me which aspires, and what is that within me that clips the wings of aspiration, so that I crawl like a worm in the dust?" And Paul answers out of his own experience, "It is the law of sin."

Paul's Remedy

This is the tragedy, but for it Paul suggests a remedy. He hears the experience of his own soul echoed in the tragic cry, "O, wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" and he answers, "I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord * * * for the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus, hath made me free from the law of sin and death." Jesus Christ is the liberator from sin, and the new power which Paul found working in his own life is expressed in Romans 6:1-11. To take Jesus as a Savior, to be buried with Him in baptism, to be engrafted into Him; this is the only sure remedy for sin.

It is well to notice the words of this eleventh verse of the sixth chapter. To become a Christian

does not mean that this struggle is ended. The fight is still on, and in earnest, for the lower nature has lost ground. What Jesus does in a man's life is to change his attitude toward things. With Jesus in your life you become dead, or unresponsive to sin. Those things which you once loved do not attract any longer. Temptation lures, but there is a power within that is stronger than temptation. With Jesus in your life you become alive, or responsive to God. Those higher things which did not appeal to you before are now attractive. Your life has been changed and re-enforced by new currents of spiritual power.

Conclusion

Do we want "the spirit of life in Christ Jesus" working in us? We all know, and some of us from bitter experience, that the struggle of the soul with sin is real. We are aware of this law which works in our bodies. Yet we follow the lead of our lower nature and allow sin to become deeper and deeper entrenched. We prefer to be slaves to "the law of sin and death," rather than free men and women through "the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus."

Over in England a few years ago a circus man won great fame as a trainer of serpents. One winter the circus was showing in a large Opera House in London. The curtain went up for an evening performance, and in the center of the stage stood this trainer with a large serpent at his feet. The man made a few motions with his wand and the snake began to wind itself around his legs. It kept winding until it had almost reached his waist. He dropped his hands to his sides and soon it had

coiled itself around him up to his shoulders. Then up and up until the whole man was covered and the serpent reared its head high in the air. The audience broke into a wild applause at this daring feat, but their applause was frozen into horror, as the great serpent, excited by the noise, began to tighten its muscles, and they saw the life of the trainer crushed out before them.

This is a picture of the power of sin when we allow it to become master of our lives. Many a soul is crushed in the hour of what seems to be its greatest triumph and success, because sin has slowly been gaining possession of it. He who plays with sin, who heeds continually the call of his lower nature, is playing with the most deadly thing in the universe. Jesus alone can give us power to overcome.

THE PERFECT IDEAL OF LIFE

And it shall come to pass in that day, that the root of Jesse, that standeth for an ensign of the peoples, unto him shall the nations seek.—Isa. 11:10.

“**T**HE power of setting up imagery so as to react upon the soul, is one of the divinest and most energizing elements in our complex being,” says Beecher. To lift an ideal, and substitute a better thing for that which we already have lies at the root of all progress, all growth.

It specially belonged to the Hebrew peoples to seek out the true way of holiness, the true God, and His life. Their ideal of Him was often crude, but it grew constantly, until some of the rapt seers caught glimpses of its universality. Isaiah saw it taking form in a perfect person, the Suffering Servant of Jehovah, Who should bear the sins of many and heal us with His stripes.

Our lives are rich or poor, high or low, noble or ignoble, in proportion as their ideal is low or high. For the highest development, we must have the most perfect ideal.

Elements of the Perfect Ideal

1. It must have power to touch the deepest, highest, finest intuitions of the soul, calling them forth into dominating power. The unholy tendencies of our nature must be checked and starved and crushed out by the cultivation and growth of our higher tendencies. The growing grain must crowd out the weeds.

2. The true ideal will keep in advance of our progress. A law, to be of the greatest benefit, must be

something better than our practice under it. If you write as well as the copy, you have no need of it. If you know as much as the teacher, you have no need of one. If you reach your ideal, progress ends. To the last day of life, the perfect ideal will be in advance of all our progress.

3. It must possess true moral and spiritual elements. Morality is fundamental. All questions, at bottom, if they are worth considering at all, are moral questions. Without it, life becomes tame and insipid. Morality is the salt, the flavor of life. But morality needs to be touched by spirituality to make it powerful. Morality is the fuel, spirituality is the flame. The figure of a man without a head would be incomplete. Morality is the body, spirituality the head.

4. Altruism must be an important part of this ideal. No purely selfish ideal can be perfect. Sin is believed to be, in its last analysis, selfishness. Our destiny is inseparably linked with our fellows. No man liveth unto himself. We cannot simply look upon our own things, but also on the things of others.

5. It must be practicable, workable. No age has been so practical as our own. America has given one philosophy to the world—Pragmatism, which sets forth the doctrine that “the only meaning of truth is the possibility of verification by experience,” and that “truth is the term applied to whatever it is practically profitable to believe.” The philosophy has its manifest limitations, but it emphasizes a phase of our modern life. Let the perfect ideal touch the skies, as it must to be perfect, but let it also be of the utmost practicability.

6. It must not be subject to death. If, after all our endeavor, the grave engulfs all, our idealism stands for naught. It must have in it the power of an endless life.

Where This Ideal Can Be Found

Only once in the history of the world were these elements blended, epitomized, in the perfect man—Christ Jesus. He meets all the conditions.

Christ touched men's bodies and their diseases left them. He touched their souls and they burst into the flower of a new life. The centuries confirm the fact that Jesus always drew out that which is highest and finest in the soul.

He has always been in advance. There have been many professing holiness, and a few perfection, but none have measured up to him. Whatever our attainments, there remain unreached heights.

He was morally and spiritually perfect. Men have found fault with the church, the Bible, the institutions of religion; but they have been unable to convict Christ of sin. He was morally perfect, the skeptics themselves being witnesses. They find no fault in him.

He was the most altruistic, unselfish, of all men. The foxes had holes, the birds had nests, but the Son of Man had not where to lay His head. He gave all for the redemption of the world.

His life wedded the highest to the most practical. His life and teaching were inseparable. He practiced what he taught and taught what he practiced. Men scoffed then as they do now, at the "impracticability" of His teachings; but the disciples caught the inspiration and united idealism and life.

“Paul, Luther, Howard, all the crowned ones,
Who star-like gleam through time,
Lived out before the clear-eyed sun,
Their inmost thought sublime.
Those truths, more beautiful than day,
They knew would quicken men,
And deeds at which the gazers sneered,
They dared to practice then;
’Till those who mocked their young ideal
In meekness owned it was the real.

* * *

Fear not to build thine eyrie in the heights,
Bright with celestial day;
And trust thyself unto thine inmost soul
In simple faith alway.
And God shall make divinely real
The highest form of thy ideal.”

Jesus was the only Lord of both worlds. He had power to lay down His life, and He had power to take it up again. The ideal lived out in Him could never die; death had no dominion over it. If it saved Him from the darkness and destruction of the grave, it will also save us. This ideal does not fail in the most crucial agony of life.

Power of the True Ideal

It has renewing, transforming power. It can make anew the meanest lives. Dr. John Todd tells of a visit the Queen of England made to a paper mill. She inquired about the use made of a pile of filthy rags of different colors which she observed. Her Majesty was assured that they could be cleansed and made into beautiful white paper. A few days after the visit the Queen found upon her table, bearing her initial and likeness, some of the most beauti-

ful white paper she had ever seen; and accompanying the gift was a note assuring her that it had been manufactured out of the very rags that her Majesty had seen. Such is the power of this ideal to cleanse and make our human lives over.

It inspires us to keep up the fight against the wrong, it matters not how deeply entrenched it may be. The man who follows the true ideal has strength and courage to dig down the strongholds of unrighteousness. When Garrison began his agitation against slavery, he was following an ideal that led him to fight in the most dangerous and self-sacrificing way.

The man who is strong to fight his fight,
Whose will no force can daunt,
While truth is truth and right is right,
Is the man that ages want.
He may fail or fall in grim defeat,
But he has not fled the strife,
And the house of earth shall smell more sweet
For the perfume of his life.

—*Paul Laurence Dunbar.*

Such an ideal has power to influence the nation. Nations are made up of individuals. If in each individual life is the highest ideal, inevitably the nation will have the highest. But if its ideals are low, it is because the people's ideals are low. Hamilton Wright Mabie interprets a genius as one who gives adequate expression to the deep feelings and ideals of the people. Patagonia has no geniuses, while Scotland has many.

It is the solution for our present day problems. That which is obscure in the lowlands becomes plain

as we ascend the mountain. The solutions we try to find while following the low are hard to get, and are only temporary in their nature. Christ taught us to lift up the highest, and to seek our solutions in its light. "Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven." The will of heaven is the law for earth. Heaven and earth are one. The New Jerusalem, the model city, descends from God out of heaven.

All we have willed or hoped or dreamed of good
shall exist;
Not its semblance, but itself; no beauty, nor good,
nor power
Whose voice has gone forth, but each survives for
the melodist,
When eternity affirms the conception of an hour;
The high that proved too high, the heroic for earth
too hard,
The passion that left the ground to lose itself in
the sky,
Are music sent up to God by the lover and the bard;
Enough that he heard it once; we shall hear it by
and by.

—*Robert Browning.*

A CONSCIENCE VOID OF OFFENCE

Herein I also exercise myself to have a conscience void of offence toward God and men always.—Acts 24:16.

CONSCIENCE is “the activity or faculty by which distinctions are made between the right and wrong in conduct and character”; in other words it is “the moral judiciary of the soul—not law, nor sheriff, but judge.” It is a moral, or ethical, conclusion, or judgment, by the whole personality. It may be said that conscience is the practical reason and not some inexplicable endowment.

Conscience and God

Daniel Webster is reported to have said, in reply to the question as to the greatest thought that ever entered his mind, that it was the thought of his personal responsibility to a personal God. Without this sense of the personality of God, there would be no sense of duty, and hence no moral judgments of any kind. Conscience and duty are of the essence of the relation between a finite and an infinite personality. “In conscience we see an ‘alter ego,’” says Knight, “in us yet not of us, another Personality behind our own.” Or to put it in the words of Martineau: “Over a person only a person can have authority * * * A solitary being, with no other sentient natures in the universe, would feel no duty.”

As the stars do not create the law of gravitation which they obey; so neither does man, nor all of the rational beings in the world, create the law of duty. Man discovers this law through a revelation from God and the development and refinement of his own

higher powers, which enable him to make the law of God his own by the free exercise of his faculties. Man tests his own judgment by the revelation of God. Man's conscience or moral judgment may be said to be like a watch. We go by it on the assumption that it is right; but when this assumption causes us to miss an important engagement, or a train, we find that the watch is wrong. We had failed to regulate it from time to time by a standard clock. So man must test his conscience, his moral judgments, by the revelation of God.

The Education of Conscience

The differences that arise among people over what is right or wrong is partially, at least, explained by the different degrees in which their consciences have been educated. Paul could say in all truth that he persecuted the church with a "good conscience." His judgment was wrong. His mind had been filled with prejudice and misinformation. As soon as he came into possession of trustworthy evidence—the voice of Jesus Himself declaring who He was—his conscience was reversed, but no better than before. He had always followed his best judgment; but it took a revelation to make that judgment perfect so far as Christ was concerned.

Conscience is not only educated by receiving the truth, with necessary additions from time to time, but also by direct communion with God. Fellowship with the holy spirit of God purifies and refines our minds and lifts us above the din and fog of earthly things and thus brings our moral judgments more perfectly into harmony with the will of God.

Conscience is also educated by obedience to the

truth we know. Lord Erskine was noted for the fearlessness of his contentions against the Bench. This was his explanation: "It was the first command and counsel of my youth always to do what my conscience told me to be my duty, and leave the consequences to God. I have hitherto followed it, and have no reason to complain that any obedience to it has been even a temporal sacrifice; I have found it, on the contrary, the road to prosperity and wealth, and I shall point it out as such to my children." A good minister of Christ said that he early resolved never to preach anything that he did not honestly and sincerely believe. His has been a strong and influential ministry as a consequence of this resolve. "If any man willeth to do his will, he shall know of the teaching, whether it is of God, or whether I speak from myself" (John 7:17).

The Social Aspects of Conscience

As already pointed out, the conception of conscience could not exist, were it not for personal beings and their relations. We are related to God in a social way, and revelation and standards of judgment result from this relationship. This familiar petition, "And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors," sets up a social standard. The condition of our acceptance with God is the acceptance of our brother. We must be right in our relations with one another in order to be right with God. The heart that cannot forgive a brother need not expect the forgiveness of God. The command of our Lord, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself," sets up another ethical standard. "A conscience void of offence toward * * * men always" requires that their interests, their

welfare, shall have the same consideration as our own. This means that the injustices that men do to their fellows in impersonal ways must cease.

The Re-enforcement of Conscience

It is a mistaken conception that men will do right just because they know what the right is. "For I know that in me, that is, in my lower self, nothing good has its home; for while the will to do right is present with me, the power to carry it out is not. For what I do is not the good thing that I desire to do; but the evil thing that I desire not to do, is what I constantly do" (Rom. 7:18, 19). Paul lived with a "good conscience," yet he was not able to carry out all that his conscience approved. The law brought knowledge of sin, but no power to overcome sin. He needed help from without. He tells us how it came and what it was. "There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus; for the Spirit's Law—telling of life in Christ Jesus—has set me free from the Law that deals only with sin and death. For what was impossible to the Law—powerless as it was because it acted through frail humanity—God effected. Sending His own Son in a body like that of sinful human nature and as a sacrifice for sin, He pronounced sentence upon sin in human nature; in order that in our case the requirements of the Law might be fully met. For our lives are regulated not by our earthly, but by our spiritual natures" (Rom. 8:1-4). The Spirit's law of life, provided through the atoning sacrifice of Christ, brought re-enforcement, and consequently triumph over sin. Conscience brings the sense of sin and the sense of duty; but it is Christ Jesus who brings the power that triumphs over sin.

The Impairment of Conscience

Conscience through inactivity may become hardened. The water in the still pond more quickly films over with ice than in the running stream. Let the waters be moved and the film will be broken; but let them remain quiet and the first glaze hardens into thick ice. So if the conscience is kept in an active healthy condition, the chilling frosts of the world will have no power to harden it. An old historian tells us about the Roman armies that marched through countries burning and destroying every living thing—"they make it a solitude, and call it peace," he says. So men may do with their consciences. They may stifle every cry, until at length there is a perfect stillness, unbroken by any voice of either approbation or blame. So they have peace; but it is the peace of death.

"Good-bye," I said to my conscience,

"Good-bye for aye and aye."

And I pushed her hands off harshly,

And turned my face away,

And conscience, smitten sorely,

Returned not from that day.

But the time came when my spirit

Grew weary of its pace,

And I said, "Come back," to my conscience,

"For I long to see thy face."

But conscience cried, "I cannot,

Remorse sits in my place."

—*Paul Laurence Dunbar.*

THE SCALE OF FAITH

* * * *Lord, I believe, help Thou mine unbelief*
* * * —Mark 9:24. *For I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.*—Romans 8:38-39.

OUR first text comes from one of the most interesting narratives in the gospels. It is a cry of faith which has just been awakened in the soul. The second comes from the experience of a soul that had gone up the scale of faith until it was able to sound forth its highest note. Somewhere between these two experiences every soul finds itself. Two important thoughts are suggested in the contrast of these passages. First, the infinite sympathy which Jesus had with those who were at or near the bottom of the scale of faith. Second, the revelation that to reach the highest note in the scale of faith is no easy accomplishment.

The Beginning of Faith

Jesus always showed remarkable interest and sympathy in a soul in which faith was just awakening. What little faith the father in Mark's story had in Jesus' power to heal his boy, was awakened by the kindly interest and attitude of Jesus. When Jesus met the Samaritan woman he knew he was in the presence of a soul that had never been awakened to real faith. Her conversation revealed her belief in the traditions of her people, her untrue and immoral life, and the faint hope in her soul of the

coming of the Messiah. And from this revelation, Jesus, through His interest and sympathy transformed her dormant hope into the beginnings of an active faith. The Centurion who at first had only a little faith in Jesus' power, was encouraged and commended for that faith. And for the woman who touched even the hem of His garment, He had sympathy and interest enough to say, "Thy faith hath made thee whole, go in peace."

Jesus has never changed this attitude toward the beginnings of faith. Any man who is willing to start at the bottom of the scale with the prayer, "Lord I believe, help thou mine unbelief," will not be disappointed.

"Wherever one repenting soul
Prays, in its agonies of pain,
By God's sweet grace to be
made whole * * * ,"

there Jesus is, ready to receive the first evidence of faith and help it to become a living thing.

The Heights of Faith

It is a long, long distance up the scale of faith to its highest note, and in every case on record this victorious faith has been wrought out in the white-heat of some great experience, or in the tragedy of some moral and spiritual failure. The great examples of faith at its heights are to be seen not in "those who have thrown faith away as a fiction and given up in the fight—that is the way of the coward—but in those men and women who have faced all the facts of life as they are at their worst, and yet won."

Joseph Fort Newton in a splendid sermon on faith, from which the thought of this sermon came, holds that "Triumphant Faith" is the theme of the Book of Job. "Property, family, health, faith, hope, everything gone, everything except his sense of moral integrity!" This is the tragic picture of Job. Yet, says Newton, "Holding to the moral ideal, he made appeal to a Reality above and beyond all known and knowable things—a Reality more commanding than what men called God, more lasting than what men call life. Slowly, under the burden of anguish, he began to perceive that, after all, there may be a greater God than man had ever dreamed; and then this possible, conceivable God becomes the true God—the real God who is just. Though bowed low he is not broken, and out of the depths he cries, 'I know that my Redeemer liveth!' The brute atheistic fact bludgeoned his faith and broke it, but he won a higher faith which, in turn, forced the darkest facts of life to yield him light. Without his tragedy he would never have felt the need of that higher faith, much less having won it. Having felt the worst he found the best, and his faith was proof against flood, and fire, and storm, and death. It was not a theory about life, but a trophy won from life—the one victory worth the winning."

How did Paul win his triumphant faith? Let him tell his own story: (I Cor. 4:11-13; II Cor. 11:24-29. Moffatt's translation.) And besides all this Paul had his "thorn in the flesh." He never tells us what it was but we know that when he ran he was handicapped, and when he fought he fought in pain. When he finally reached Rome, the height of his ambition as a missionary, he was in chains. "Chained to a Praetorian Guard, dwelling in his

own hired house, misunderstood by the Jews, mentally torn concerning his approaching trial, weakened by the subtle oncoming of age, keenly aware of the danger of a martyr's death, deserted by all save one or two faithful associates—the house becomes a church, the preacher's voice is vibrant with high emotion. Never was the gospel better preached than by this missionary handicapped in Rome." Never was faith more triumphant.

Perhaps the greatest Biblical illustration of a man who found triumphant faith through the tragedy of moral and spiritual failure is that of David. When the true meaning and guilt of his sin and failure was forced upon him, "out of the depths of his soul" he cried up to God for forgiveness. And while the evil effects of his sin were not taken away, yet, in the consciousness which came into his soul that his sin had been forgiven, that "as far as the east is from the west," just so far had his transgressions been removed from him, he found the faith which enabled him to write, "The Lord is my Shepherd * * * Jehovah is my light and my salvation * * * whom shall I fear? Jehovah is the strength of my life, of whom shall I be afraid?"

Conclusion

There are two ways of meeting the universe. We can attempt to meet the ills of life in our own strength, or we can meet them in the strength of a conquering faith.

"Out of the night that covers me,
Black as the pit from pole to pole,
I thank whatever gods may be
For my unconquerable soul.

“In the fell clutch of circumstance
I have not winced nor cried aloud.
Under the bludgeonings of chance
My head is bloody, but unbowed.

“Beyond the place of wrath and tears
Looms but the horror of the shade,
And yet the menace of the years
Finds, and shall find, me unafraid.

“It matters not how strait the gate,
How charged with punishments the scroll,
I am the master of my fate:
I am the captain of my soul.”

This is the poet Henley throwing down the gauntlet to the universe. It is a stirring picture—“the picture of a magnificent fight, a titanic man blindly, brutally, vindictively squared against the onrushing charge of wrathful circumstance * * * It is thrilling, but it is pagan; it is inspiring, but it is gladiatorial. It means nothing but a raw, fierce struggle on the sands of the world’s arena.”

There is another and better way. It is the way of the soul that can say: “I know him whom I have believed * * * ” “Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death I shall fear no evil * * * ” “I know that my Redeemer liveth * * * ” It is the way of a great Christian poet who could say at the close of his life,

“For tho’ from out our bourne of time and place
The flood may bear me far,
I hope to see my Pilot face to face,
When I have crossed the bar.”

THE ETHICS OF THE PLEA FOR UNION

Now the God of patience and of comfort grant you to be of the same mind one with another according to Christ Jesus.—Romans 15:5.

DR. FRANCIS L. PATTON thus defines ethics: "Ethics is the science that offers a rational explanation of the idea of Rightness and Oughtness; and that deals with the life of free personal beings under these conceptions, considering it as related to an ideal or norm of excellence, conformity to which is obligatory." We have here a free personality brought into relation with rightness as an ideal, and the feeling of obligation, or oughtness, that moves him to harmonize his actions with this ideal. In applying this conception of ethics to the special plea that the people known as Disciples of Christ make in behalf of Christian Union, we have to consider the freedom of all those who have been called of God, the rightness of the special plea that is being made, and the "conformity to which is obligatory."

The Freedom of the Christian

Our Master said, "If therefore the Son shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed" (John 8:36). The context shows that he had in mind freedom from sin and its consequent bondage. "We are Abraham's seed, and have never been in bondage to any man: how sayest thou, Ye shall be made free?" queried the Jews; to which Jesus replied, "Every one that committeth sin is the bondservant of sin. And the bondservant abideth not in the house forever: the Son abideth forever." Of very close kin to the

foregoing is the following, "If any man willeth to do his will, he shall know of the teaching, whether it is of God, or whether I speak from myself" (John 7:17). Obedience therefore becomes the organ of spiritual knowledge, and hence the means of spiritual freedom. In this way the Son makes us free. The freedom, then, to which Christians have been called is the deliverance of their souls from the power and bondage of sin which enables them henceforth to become the instruments of righteousness. Man was made for God and his nature cannot be free except in His service. A locomotive is the most helpless and unfree thing in the world unless it is on the track that was specially prepared for it. It was made for a certain environment, and the environment at the same time was made for it. God exists for us, and we for Him. Outside of this relationship man has no proper freedom. Whatever is right is of God, and man ought to do—must do—the right as he understands it. If it is right for Christians to dwell together in unity, and to express this unity in union, or co-operation, for the world-wide ends of the Kingdom of God, then a serious moral obligation rests upon them, and from it they cannot escape.

The Rightness of Unity and Union

1. To consider the matter, in the first place, on grounds outside of the Scriptures, we find that any house divided against itself cannot stand. Christians are agreed that Christianity is a good thing for the individual and for society and that consequently it should be more widely disseminated. This being true, reason dictates that this common understanding, or purpose, should bring about the fullest

co-operation, since no worthy progress can be made without harmonious effort.

2. The Scriptures plainly teach that believers should be "of the same mind one with another according to Christ Jesus." Our Lord in that notable prayer, not many hours before his crucifixion, voiced what he deeply felt concerning the unity of his disciples. "Neither for these only do I pray, but for them also that believe on me through their word; that they may all be one; even as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou didst send me * * * And the glory which thou hast given me I have given unto them; that they may be one, even as we are one; I in them and thou in me, that they may be perfected into one" (John 17:20-23). After the resurrection of our Lord, the descent of the Holy Spirit, and the conversion of many souls, we read, "And the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and soul" (Acts 4:32). Thus we see the spirit of unity for which He prayed manifesting itself in His church; and there is just one note throughout the New Testament on this subject, the constant exhortation "to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace."

3. Another consideration, if anything further might seem to be needed, is that the salvation of the world is somehow dependent upon the unity of Christians—"that they may all be one; even as thou, Father, art in me and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou didst send me." Christ definitely prays that His disciples may be one—to the end that the world may believe. Unity and world-wide evangelism are vitally related. After two thousand years of

the Christian era, only about one-third of the world is nominally Christian, or 564,510,000 out of a world population of 1,646,491,000. To bring the remaining two-thirds into the Kingdom will require the greatest effort of a united church, and without unity of purpose and effort the task is impossible. It is easy to believe in the Fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man, when men love each other and work together for the accomplishment of common ends; but exceedingly hard when distrust, and even hate, replace each other, and no common ends are recognized. A united church, therefore, is essential to faith, essential to world-wide evangelism, and its rightness cannot be called in question.

Obligation of Church Union

Now what shall we say to these things? The Scriptures plainly teach the great importance for the Kingdom of God of a united church, especially united in the Spirit. This does not mean uniformity, for "uniformity brings death, variety brings life"; but it does mean oneness of spirit, oneness of life and purpose, and the heartiest co-operation in spreading the Good Tidings. Unity and co-operation belong to the essential nature of the religion of Christ. Paul in rebuking the Corinthians for their partisanship and divisions, plainly asks, "Is the Christ in fragments?" (Weymouth.)

It would seem that no Christian, who reads and honors the New Testament, can avoid being a strong advocate of just these things. Yet we heard a Christian man, one long in the ministry and with scholarly attainments, say that he would not walk across the street to unite the churches.

Of course there are many things that work against

union, the chief of which is no doubt denominational pride. It is difficult for those who have been brought up in a church where they have been taught that it more than others has the true light and interpretation of the word of God not to be suspicious of all others. There are many other difficulties in the way; but whatever they may be, God's true children must continue to work for the unity and union of all Christians. An ethical obligation rests upon them which they cannot avoid. It must be done in humility and prayer. The spirit of controversy will never do it. Jesus prayed when he would have his disciples to be one; and shall his church accomplish so great a task with lesser means?

DEATH

* * * *it is appointed unto men once to die.*—
Heb. 9:27.

THE dates inscribed on the monuments tell us that here we have no certain tenure of our existence. No one in the healthful and rational exercise of his faculties desires to be cut off in the midst of the years; yet we are the prey of the forces about us.

“A thousand rocks deep hid elude our sight,
A star may set and we are lost in night,
A breeze may waft us to the whirlpool’s brink,
A treacherous song allure us and we sink.
Death steals upon us in the zephyr’s breath,
And festal garlands veil the shafts of death.”

Death Has No Respect to Persons

Death is remorseless. To our human thinking the sinner should not be cut off in his sin, but should be granted further opportunities for repentance; the righteous should be spared for the good they may do, and the youth for the promise of his life. But there is no pity.

“The youth in life’s green spring, and he who goes
In the full strength of years, matron and maid,
And the sweet babe, and the gray-haired man—
Shall, one by one, be gathered to thy side
By those who in their turn shall follow them.”

Death Bears Universal Sway

No age of time has been exempt from his universal sway. Holy Writ tells us that he reigned from Adam to Moses, even over those who had not sinned

after the similitude of Adam's transgression; and the geologist presents his fossiliferous specimen, which proclaims his reign over the infant world; and the archaeologist digs among the ruins of a more recent civilization, and presents to us the mummied remains of those who paid their tribute in that age. When we think of the billions who have thronged the planet since the years began, and yet have passed away, we conclude that

“All that tread
The globe are but a handful to the tribes
That slumber in its bosom. Take the wings
Of the morning, traverse Barca's desert sands,
Or lose thyself in the continuous woods
Where rolls the Oregon, and hears no sound
Save his own dashings,—yet the dead are there!
And millions in those solitudes since first
The flight of years began, have laid them down
In their last sleep,—the dead reign there alone.”

Does the Grave Receive All?

Does the grave receive all there is of man? Is there anything that escapes the collapse of his corporeal powers and wings itself to another realm? We question, and is there no reply? Is it true that from out the waste seas there drifts no spar; that over the desert of death the Sphinx gazes forever, but never speaks; that the golden bridge of life emerges from gloom and rests on shadow?

“If all our hopes and all our fears,
Were prisoned in life's narrow bound;
If, travelers through this vale of tears,
We saw no better world beyond;

“Oh, what could check the rising sigh?
What earthly thing could pleasure give?
Oh, who would venture then to die?
Oh, who could then endure to live?”

Emerson declares that, “Our dissatisfaction with any other solution is the blazing evidence of immortality.” “We do not believe in immortality because we have proved it,” says Martineau, “but we forever try to prove it because we believe in it.” There is universal witness to this belief.

There are many things that intimate to us that the spirit of man has not perished because we have not seen it leave the body or beheld it in its blessed abode. The realities are, after all, the unseen rather than the seen. Herbert Spencer declared to John Fisk that we cannot take up any problem in physics without quickly coming upon metaphysical questions which we cannot answer, neither deny, and the same philosopher pushed his inquiries to the point where he had to say “there is an infinite and eternal energy.” He could not see nor explain this energy, but he must admit it. Who ever saw the law of gravitation, or of chemical affinity, or of molecular attraction? They operate in a marvelous way. Gravitation holds the worlds in their place, but we do not see it. The law of affinity works in our bodies to distribute supplies to the various parts, but no one sees it, and yet were its operations to stop we would die instantly. The unseen spirit affords no just ground for skepticism.

Death is not a break in the continuity of our existence. It is merely an epochal change. Scientists tell us that the polar regions, now capped with ice and snow, once flourished as the tropics; but owing

to some new inclination of the earth toward the sun a revolutionary change was wrought, but still the earth revolves and warms in the sun. This may intimate to us the change that comes to man. Nature is full of the instinct of immortality. An old Celtic legend tells us that "God sends the gloom upon the cloud and there is rain. God sends the gloom upon the hill and there is mist. God sends the gloom upon the sun and there is winter. It is God, too, who sends the gloom upon the soul and there is change. The swallow knows when to lift up her wing over against the shadow that creeps out of the North; the wild swan knows when the smell of snow is behind the sun; the salmon, lone in the brown pool among the hills, hears the deep sea, and his tongue pants for salt and his fins quiver, and he knows that his time has come and the sea calls. How, then, shall the soul not know when the change is nigh at last? Is it a less thing than a reed, which sees the yellow birch-gold adrift on the lake and the gown of the heather grow russet when the purple has passed into the sky and the white bog-down wave gray and tattered where the lone-roid grows dark and pungent—which sees and knows that the breath of the Death-Weaver at the pole is fast faring along the frozen norland peaks. It is more than a reed, it is more than a wild doe on the hills, it is more than the swallow lifting up her wing against the coming of the shadow, it is more than a swan drunken with savor of the blue wine of the waves when the green Arctic lawns are white and still; it is more than these which has the Son of God for brother and is clothed with light." God will not blot out in the tomb what stands next to himself as the most perfect of all earthly beings.

Effects of Our Immortality

St. Paul in closing his great argument for the resurrection, concludes by saying: "Wherefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast and unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord." The doctrine had a practical bearing.

With eternity in view, we will be more careful workmen than would otherwise be the case. The quarryman will be more diligent in his employment of getting out stone if he feels that he has part in a great enterprise to be completed in the future. If Paul, spending and being spent that the Kingdom of God might be established in Asia Minor, had received an authoritative word that there was, in fact, no Kingdom of God, neither now nor in the future, his powers would have been paralyzed. He would, no doubt, have continued to live a good life; but there would have been no zeal, no zest, no earnestness in his work. His hopes, his interest, his very life, would have vanished with his vision of the Kingdom of God. The man with eternity in his heart will be a better, more conscientious worker, whatever his task, than he who believes the grave quite closes us in.

Alas for him who never sees
The stars shine through his cypress-trees!
Who, hopeless, lays his dead away,
Nor looks to see the breaking day
Across the mournful marbles play!
Who hath not learned, in hours of faith,
The truth to flesh and sense unknown,
That Life is ever lord of Death,
And Love can never lose its own!

—Whittier.

THE SCIENTIFIC DEMONSTRATION OF THE RESURRECTION LIFE

But now is Christ risen from the dead.—I Cor. 15:20.

If ye then be risen with Christ.—Col. 3:1.

IT was hard for the Jew to think of a resurrection of any kind that did not involve the idea of the resuscitation of matter previously alive but now dead. Hence he coupled resurrection with the revival of the dead body. But resurrection cannot be confined to this idea; in fact such idea is not an inherent idea of the resurrection at all. Resurrection means the rising up of a new, spiritual life that displaces the old and gives an entirely new direction to the whole of life's activities.

The Resurrection Scientifically Demonstrated

Now the resurrection of Jesus Christ was the first scientific demonstration of the resurrection. He claimed that He would rise again from the dead; that death had no power to destroy Him; that the life that was in Him was eternal. He declared Himself to be the resurrection and the life. That was His belief, and His proclamation. He demonstrated it by coming back from the dead and openly showing Himself alive to His apostles. This proved by scientific demonstration that Jesus was right in what He said; and it furnishes strong presumptive evidence that the same will be true of every believer in Him.

The Demonstration In Each Life

But the evidence is not to be merely presumptive or probable, though the probability be so strong as to amount to a certainty—it is to be of the nature of demonstrative evidence as it was in the case of Jesus. In the nature of the case we cannot die literally, each one in his own case, to prove the truth of the claims based on what Jesus did; but it is given to each one to make a demonstration in his own behalf by the use of certain appropriate symbols which are filled with the same Spirit that was in Jesus. By faith and obedience in baptism we make this demonstration, and we do then and there enter into the resurrection life. We are risen with Christ. The resurrection life has come into us. We shall die no more. The Spirit bears witness with our spirit.

Its Universal Validity

This is valid for all who have tried it. It is not the narrow experience of just one man here and there; but of all persons who have made the demonstration. It is therefore universal—just as universal as any scientific experiment can be. If the laws are observed, what takes place in a definite scientific experiment at a given place will take place wherever it is performed. So here.

The evidence is first in one's own spirit. This may not be convincing to any one else, but it is to one's own soul. The self has no doubt. "We know that we have passed from death unto life." The evidence must be valid for the individual. By means of a powerful intuition he is made certain that the resurrection life is now in him, and that he has passed from death unto life.

“JOINING THE CHURCH”

* * * *And the Lord added to them day by day those that were saved.—Acts 2:47.*

IN the text quoted from the revised version, the word “church” is omitted. Moffatt thinks it difficult on account of this omission to get any sense out of the original; nevertheless he ventures upon this rendering, “Meantime the Lord added the saved daily to their number.” Weymouth would thus make it intelligible to English readers, “Also, day by day, the Lord added to their numbers those whom He was saving.” Whether the word “church” be allowed as part of the text or not, it is perfectly plain that “those whom he was saving” were added to the company of believers, and no one denies that these believers were the church.

The Condition of Membership

There is just one condition, namely, the possession of the Spirit of Christ. This automatically joins the soul in fellowship with the “beloved community.” It makes an addition of the Lord’s own adding. The Apostle Paul solemnly says, “But if any man hath not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his” (Rom. 8:9). Membership in the spiritual body of Christ, which is His church, can be obtained in no other way. Man can neither add nor debar. It is the Lord who adds the saved to His church,—and “the Lord knoweth them that are his.”

But is not the reception of the Holy Spirit conditioned? Undoubtedly. The Spirit presses against the door of the heart seeking entrance, but the bolt can only be moved by us. The tides of spiritual

quickenings cannot be released in our hearts until we have opened the door. Faith is the hand that moves the bolt. Faith is action, obedience to the word of Christ; the will consciously lays hold upon Christ. This opens the door to the Holy Spirit.

Does baptism condition the gift of the Holy Spirit? Yes, and no. The household of Cornelius received the Spirit before baptism. The same was apparently true in the case of Paul. "So Ananias went off and entered the house, laying his hands on him with these words, 'Saul, my brother, I have been sent by the Lord, by Jesus who appeared to you on the road, to let you regain your sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit.' In a moment something like scales fell from his eyes, he regained his sight, got up and was baptized." In other cases the Spirit was not given until after baptism. When the Samaritans "believed Philip, who preached the gospel of the Reign of God and the name of Jesus, they had themselves baptized, both men and women" (Acts 8:12). "When the apostles at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had accepted the word of God, they despatched Peter and John, who came down and prayed that the Samaritans might receive the Holy Spirit. (As yet it had not fallen upon any of them; they had simply been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.) Then they laid their hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit." In like manner Paul laid his hands on the twelve disciples of John, whom he found in Ephesus, and "the Holy Spirit came upon them" (Acts 19:6). It is an arresting fact, in this connection that the Apostles were filled with the Spirit on Pentecost, knowing only the baptism of John.

Baptism for those who have already received the Spirit, is a sign, a symbol, a confession before the world concerning what the Lord has done in cleansing and purifying the heart. Baptism for those who have not received the Spirit, as in the case of the Pentecostians and the Ethiopian eunuch, is a prayer, an action, a moving forward to take what has been promised; for Peter, speaking under inspiration, said, "Repent ye, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ unto the remission of your sins; and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit." So the believing, confessing heart has released to itself, times without number, the energies of the Holy Spirit in the act of baptism. Possessing the Spirit, by whatsoever means obtained, we are members of the church of the first born whose names are in the book of life. Forms and symbols are meaningless without the Spirit.

The Place of the Highest Culture

Dr. Goodell in his latest book, "Heralds of a Passion," has a pertinent chapter on "Culture—A Load or a Lift." Much that passes for culture to-day is utterly superficial. It leaves the springs of life untouched—indeed, it often corrupts them. The real, deep, abiding cultural power has its seat in Christ and His church. Here are cultivated the finest feelings, the most tender and beautiful sympathies, and the sweetest fellowships. It is not strange that a gentleman, who was having his daughter educated in London while Dr. R. J. Campbell was pastor of the City Temple, directed that she should hear this noted preacher on every Sunday as a part of her education. This man had a well grounded conception of the true meaning of educa-

tion. No life can be complete without availing itself of the culture which the church affords; for true culture is more of the heart than of the head, though the church offers both in their best form.

An Opportunity for the Noblest Service

We make our contribution to life by rendering some worthy service to our fellowmen. The church, aside from inspiring us to do our best in every activity, offers through its own channels opportunities for the highest service. It is said that the merchant prince John Wanamaker has won more men to Christ than any preacher in Philadelphia. There could have been rendered no higher service than this. It means the qualifying of men for two worlds—the making of happy homes, happy social relations—and in the end everlasting life.

The Church and Final Salvation

It is difficult, if not impossible, for any man to be saved alone. Salvation is a process that is worked out in fellowship with each other. "If we love not our brother whom we have seen, how can we love God whom we have not seen?" It is easy to believe in God when we are with good people; difficult, when with evil. A young man was sorely tried in his faith. The intellectual difficulties seemed too great to be overcome. But the patient, tender, beautiful, and Christ-like disposition, which he daily witnessed in his father, brought him back to faith and held him to the church. Believers strengthen belief in others. Love begets love. The flaming spirit lights other spirits. God comes to earth and speaks with compelling power in every heroic, unselfish sacrifice. God is in His church, and to be near Him we must be members of that church.

WHO WAS JESUS?

But who say ye that I am?—Matt. 16:15.

IF the reference by Josephus to Jesus is an interpolation, then we have no contemporary record; no contemporary mention even, of the life of Jesus has been preserved to us. It is the greatest paradox of all history. The great ones of history, generally speaking, did something during life that gave them a record and a fame; but here, strictly from the standpoint of the historian, was an obscure personage whose entire theatre of action, so far as known, consisted of the petty state of Palestine, at that time one of the minor dependencies of Rome. He lives but a few years, and His fame is unknown beyond the borders of the state in which He had His greatest activity. "Yet the historical result of these activities was more momentous," says a historian, "even from a strictly secular standpoint, than the deeds of any other character of history. A new era, recognized by the chief civilizations of the world, dates from His birth; and whole libraries of literature are devoted to every aspect of His life, in strange contrast to the paucity of contemporary records." How can such a strikingly unique personality be accounted for?

Heredity Offers No Explanation

The parents of Jesus were obscure. In several generations there had been no outstanding personality among them. No genius of any sort, so far as known, had appeared in the ancestral line within several generations. It has been said of Lincoln, that he was the only great man whom heredity could

not explain; and yet heredity as understood to-day may offer some explanation in his case. But not so in the case of Jesus. What He was, and what He did, are in such contrast to all that went before, that no hereditary principle in itself is capable of suggesting a solution.

Environment Cannot Explain

The great names of history have not appeared alone. They have usually been surrounded by able lieutenants and men of genius. "Heroes, teachers, and leaders of men have always been seen as central stars in larger constellations, surrounded by lesser but kindred lights," says Dr. Henry Van Dyke. "Plato shines in conjunction with Socrates and Aristotle; Caesar with Pompey and Crassus; Luther with Melancthon and Calvin; Shakespeare with Beaumont and Fletcher and Ben Jonson; Napoleon surrounded with his brilliant staff of marshals and diplomats; Wordsworth among the mild glories of the Lake poets. In every case, if you search the neighborhood of a great name, you will find not a blank sky, but an encircling galaxy. But Jesus Christ stands in an immense solitude." He even chose as His disciples unlettered fishermen from Galilee. "There was nothing in the soil of the sordid and narrow Jewish race to produce such an embodiment of universal love. There was nothing in the atmosphere of that corrupt and sensual age to beget or foster such a character of stainless and complete virtue" (Van Dyke).

What Jesus Has Done

(1) He undermined the very intense, sincere, and well-founded, but selfish Jewish religion. (2) He

destroyed pagan religion. "Sexual and other fleshly excesses were the very soul of the mysterious rites connected with the worship of Bacchus, Cybele and Venus. Public defilement was regarded as an act of religion." (3) He laid the foundations of a new religion. This was hard to do, when we recall that its great doctrine had to do with a crucified Jew, and its life with the severest ethics, running counter to every established code. (4) He undertook to win the whole world to Himself. To-day one-third of it is nominally Christian, and all of it under the influence of the nations professing Christianity. (5) All this has been done within historic time. Jesus began His work, not in some legendary age, but in the historic period of Caesar Augustus. (6) All has been done in the face of calumniators, skeptical philosophers, scoffers, heretics and divisions within, and bloody persecutions without and within.

The Means Employed

This has all been accomplished, not by angels, but by men. Nor were many mighty ones called, but men without special training in the schools, men of rough exterior, without armies, without social influence or prestige of any kind—these were the first ambassadors of the crucified Jew. But these men had what no others possessed—the living Spirit of Jesus. Their souls were a flame of fire, and their tongues were loosed to proclaim the gospel of His resurrection. They overthrew established religions and toppled kingdoms by their burning, searching words. So far as the world is able to judge, the means employed are exceedingly weak, and out of all proportion to the results accomplished.

The Inevitable Inference

From all this, and very much more not mentioned, it is an inevitable inference that Jesus was no ordinary man, doing His mighty works in the world by such powers as men employ. He was so vastly different in every way, that the only conclusion that can safely be drawn is, that He was indeed *God manifested in the flesh*. Hence that disciple was right, who first confessed, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God" (Matt. 16:16). The categories of historical science, of man-made philosophy, cannot explain Him. He was King of kings in the realm of intellect, in the purity of His heart, and in His unspotted moral nature. There was none like Him before, then, nor will there ever be again.

Subtlest thought shall fail and learning falter,
Churches change, forms perish, systems go,
But our human needs, they shall not alter,
Christ no after age shall e'er outgrow.

Yea, Amen! O changeless One, Thou only
Art life's guide and spiritual goal,
Thou the Light across the dark veil lonely,—
Thou the eternal haven of the soul.

—*John Campbell Shairp.*

THE ETERNAL CHRIST

* * * *and of his kingdom there shall be no end.—
Luke 1:33.*

The Universal Christ

IN the closing chapter of his "Manhood of the Master," Harry Emerson Fosdick shows how Jesus has overcome four of the greatest divisions in the life of the race. First, He has overcome the divisions between the successive generations of men—the divisions of time. Second, He has overleaped the deep division of race. Third, He has overleaped the basic division between manhood and womanhood—the division of sex. Fourth, He has completely bridged the chasm between the successive stages of growth from childhood to old age.

Friend and Saviour

During his ministry Jesus appealed constantly to the universal, or fundamental elements in human life. All types of people responded to His call, not because He played up their particular cause or sought in any special way their favor, but because He went deeper than any other teacher had ever gone, and found the common source, or common ground of all their needs. Rich men, scholars, military men, sick men, women and little children, lawyers, farmers, publicans and sinners—all, somehow, were attracted to him. Perhaps the greatest assumption Jesus made was that all men regardless of race or color or condition are made of the same stuff, and His whole ministry seemed to demonstrate that He was not wrong in that assumption. Men and women instinctively recognized in Jesus a friend

Who knew their deepest needs and was giving His splendid manhood in an effort to meet them.

Here we find the explanation of the universality of Jesus and the continued power of His kingdom through the centuries. He has gone deep enough to meet those great needs which are common to all men, and He has always stood as the last barrier to eternal destruction.

Man is a wonderful creature. His passions and his will power are among the most mighty forces in the universe. Barrier after barrier goes down before the assault of man's aroused passions and his indomitable will. But somehow, when men have fairly and honestly faced the barrier of this Eternal Christ they have stopped. When man is tempted to doubt the fact of God, it is the revelation of God in the face of Jesus Christ that stands between him and atheism. When man is tempted to play the selfish game of life, to get all he can out of his fellows without giving anything in return, it is the Christ of the Towel and Basin Who stops him. When man sinks to the level of the beast and would do those things which disgrace and mar his manhood, it is the pure character of the Son of God that stays him.

Conclusion

And until you have seen this Eternal Christ as a Saviour you have never really seen Him at all. You do not know Jesus Christ if you have only read about Him in a book. You do not know Jesus if you have only heard Him preached from the pulpit. You do not know Him if you have only gazed upon the artist's conception of His lovely face in some great masterpiece. You will never know Jesus Christ, until in some hour you find the powers of

hell in possession of your soul, and find yourself being swept away from all that is true and honest and pure in your makeup and on to the very gates of the destruction of your soul—oh, I say you will never know Him, “Whom to know is eternal life,” until in that hour you see Him standing as the one barrier between you and destruction!

From the earliest centuries the story has come that when the storm of persecution broke over the Christian church in Rome, the little company of believers sought Peter to seek refuge in flight. He set out by night along the Appian Way. But as he traveled a vision flashed upon him of a figure clothed in white and a face crowned with thorns. “Whither goest thou, Lord?” Peter cried. “To Rome to be crucified instead of thee.”

“Into the night the vision ebbed like breath,
And Peter turned, and rushed on Rome and
death.”

A little boy who had been told the meaning of the service flags in the windows, seeing the evening star in all its brightness gleaming over the roofs asked, “Whose star is that?” He was told, “That is God’s star.” The boy paused a little, then asked, “Does God have a son in the war too?” Yes, God has a son in the war—the long endless war between your lower and higher natures, between the forces that would lift you up and make you a child of God and the forces which would drag you down to hell, between sin and salvation, between life and death. It is a war in which humanity would be lost if it were not for the leadership of the Eternal Christ. And this Christ calls for strong men and women who will make this great fight with Him.

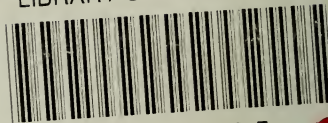
Deacidified using the Bookkeeper process.
Neutralizing agent: Magnesium Oxide
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